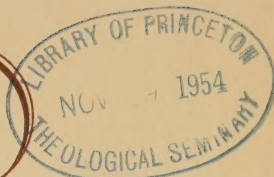


Congregations of the New York Ministerium, Hartwick Synod, and Franckean Synod in 1856

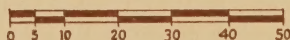
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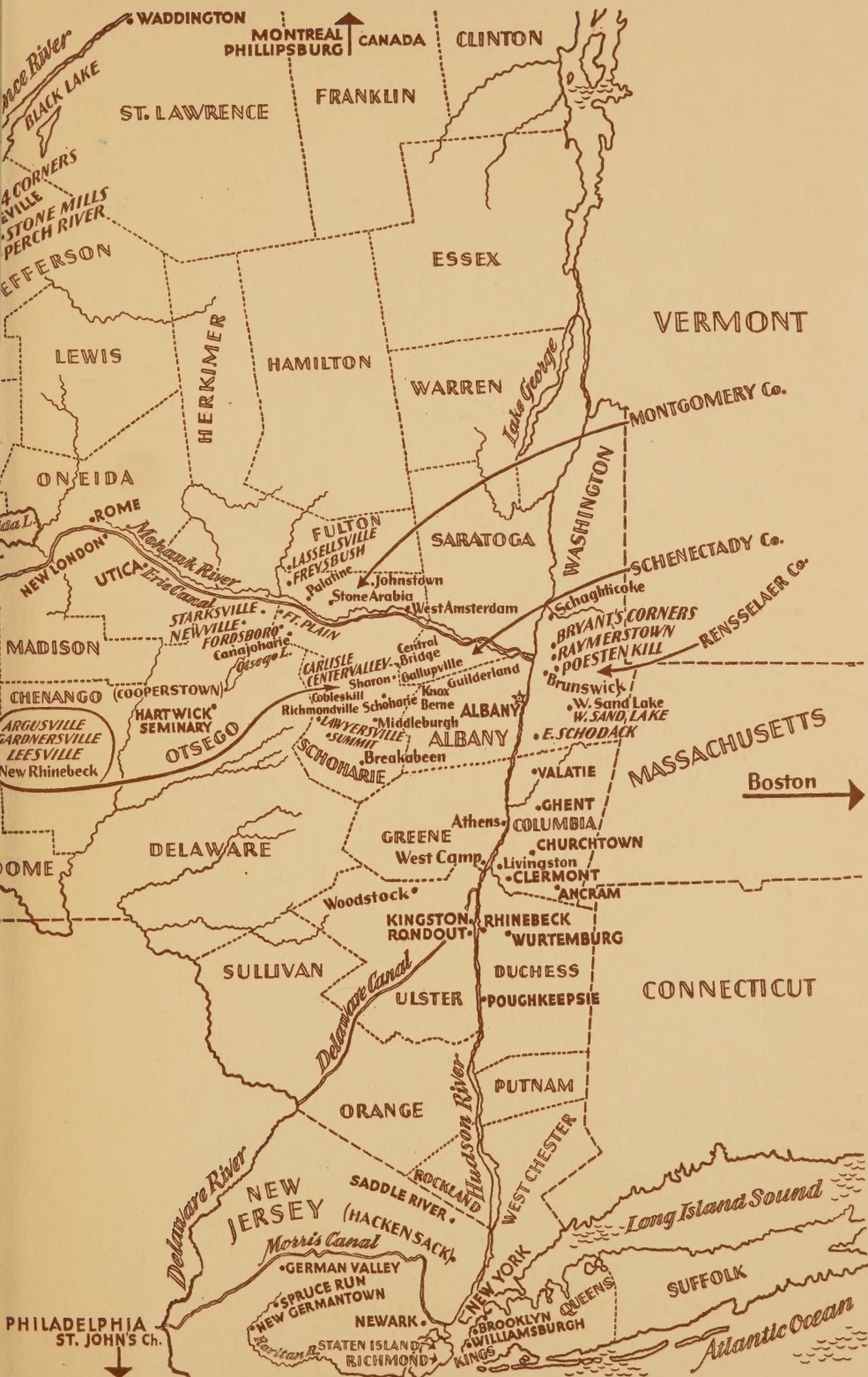


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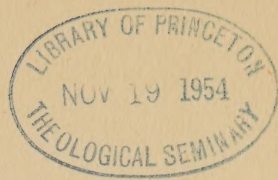
- ALBANY . . .** Congregation in N. Y. Ministerium
- SUMMIT . . .** " " Franckean Synod
- Schoharie . .** " " Hartwick Synod
- Lake Erie . . .** Bodies of Water
- NEW YORK .** States, Counties, etc.



History
of
The United Lutheran Synod of
New York and New England



JOHN CHRISTOPHER KUNZE



History of The United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England

HARRY J. KREIDER, PH.D., D.D.

Historian of The Synod

Written at the Request of The Synod

VOLUME I
1786 - 1860

1954

MUHLENBERG PRESS + PHILADELPHIA

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BY HARRY J. KREIDER

Previously published volumes in the Synod's historical project

By the same author

LUTHERANISM IN COLONIAL NEW YORK, 1942

BEGINNINGS OF LUTHERANISM IN NEW YORK, 1949

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NEW YORK, 1649-1772, RECORDS
IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH ARCHIVES AT AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND

Translated by Arnold J. F. van Laer

Published by the New York Public Library, 1946

Library of Congress Catalog

Card Number 54-9180

In Grateful Remembrance
of

SAMUEL TREXLER

1877—1949

First President of the United Synod

Preface

In this year 1954 the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reunion of the various synods in New York, New England and northern New Jersey which stemmed from the first synod, the New York Ministerium. The interrelationship of the synods is shown on the chart at the close of the section following this preface.

At the meeting in 1929 when the reunion took place, the New York Synod, one of the merging bodies, "invited" the newly formed United Synod "to authorize the preparation and publication of a history of the Lutheran Church of New York and adjacent states." Two years later the United Synod decided "that such a history be prepared and published" in connection with the celebration in 1936 of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first synod in New York.

The committee appointed to prepare for the celebration in 1936 decided upon a history of New York Lutheranism in a scholarly documentary form. Dr. George Linn Kieffer headed the editorial committee of seventeen to prepare the work, with the hearty participation and encouragement of Dr. Ellis B. Burgess, president of the Synod.

The committee went to work aggressively to assemble the documentary material. They soon discovered, however, that most of the records for the colonial period were not available in this country and suspected that there were some in foreign archives not even known to exist. Further work on the documentary history was deferred until the records were made available.

It was my assignment to locate all the records for the colonial period that might still be in existence, both in this country and in Europe. The records that were recovered were far beyond anything we had hoped for.

Most important was the large collection in the archives of the old Lutheran Church in Amsterdam, Holland, going back to 1649.

When the 150th anniversary celebration in 1936 was over, a permanent Committee on Documentary History was set up, with Dr. Kieffer as its first chairman. But less than a year later, in April 1937, Dr. Kieffer died. It was my privilege to be appointed his successor. The committee reasserted the principles which had been established under Dr. Kieffer's chairmanship, namely, that "it has set for its standard the highest ideals of historical scholarship" and "pledges its continued effort to publish only that which will be a credit to our great Synod."

With the newly recovered records relating to the colonial period coming in steadily, the committee concentrated its efforts upon getting them transcribed and translated. It was a prodigious task. The first collection, that in the archives of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam, was translated by Mr. Arnold J. F. van Laer, archivist of the State of New York and outstanding Dutch scholar in America.

The translation of the Amsterdam records made it possible to write the first part of the history of the Lutheran Church in New York, in the volume titled *Lutheranism in Colonial New York* and published in 1942. It gives the documented story of the Lutheran movement in New York during the colonial period.

Shortly afterward Mr. Van Laer's translations of the Amsterdam records were published by the New York Public Library in its *Bulletin* in 1944 and 1945, and then as a separate volume in 1946, titled *The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772, Records in the Lutheran Church Archives at Amsterdam, Holland*.

In 1949 the United Synod commemorated the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Church in New York. At the request of the Synod a second volume was published last year titled *Beginnings of Lutheranism in New York*. It is the detailed story of the first twenty years of the church's life in New York, much of it based upon Dutch sources not previously used.

Now, in this twenty-fifth year of the United Synod, I am happy that the desire expressed at the reunion meeting in 1929 is carried a step further toward realization, in the publication of the first volume of the *History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England*. It covers the period from the establishment of the New York Ministerium in 1786 to the eve of the Civil War. When the history is brought down

to the present time it will give the whole story as summarized on the pages following this preface.

The story from 1786 to the present time is complicated, as evidenced from the fact that there were at least nine, possibly ten, synods that are the antecedents of the present United Synod. The various synods were widely diversified in their doctrine, life and activities, ranging from the orthodox Steimle Synod on the right, to the Pietistic, revivalistic, no-creed-but-the-Bible Franckean Synod on the left. To produce a work that would describe accurately the intricate interrelationship of so many synods is no small undertaking. Years were needed to gather, record and collate the source material. But even more time was needed to organize and digest the material thoroughly, so that it would be possible to write the story understandingly and objectively.

It has been my aim, as far as that was possible, to let those who made the history tell it in their own words. To that end the writings of these men are liberally quoted.

Also, while giving due attention to synodical organization, constitutional development and statistical growth, it has nevertheless been my chief concern to portray the life of these synods and the movements within and without which brought them into being, gave them a reason for thinking, speaking and acting as they did, and got them eventually to understand and appreciate each other sufficiently to unite one with the other until at last they all came together to form the present United Synod.

Since this is the first time a history of all the synods in New York and their interrelationship has been undertaken, I am genuinely grateful to a number of men in various departments of the church's life for a critical reading of the manuscript of this volume: to the officers of the United Synod, President Frederick R. Knubel, Secretary Paul C. White, and Treasurer Ernst Erickson; to the American Lutheran historians, Professors Abdel Ross Wentz and Theodore G. Tappert, of the Lutheran Seminaries at Gettysburg and Philadelphia respectively, and to publisher Frank L. Egner, Vice President of Blakiston and Company, Incorporated.

Grateful appreciation is expressed also to President Knubel and Secretary White for their continuing encouragement of the entire historical project of the Synod and of the synodical history in particular.

Grateful acknowledgment is made also to my wife Dagmar, to my son Frank, student at the Philadelphia Seminary, and to my daughter Dagmar, student at Wagner College, for the years of painstaking help

given me in recording and collating the reams of basic source items necessary for a thorough understanding of the New York synodical story.

The same grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Simon Hart of Amsterdam, Holland, my colleague in the translation of the remaining Dutch colonial records, for his particularly helpful work on the period of Wilhelm Berkenmeyer.

For a long time I have sought an appropriate opportunity to express my gratitude to three men in the United Lutheran Church whose influence in my life is related directly to the synodical history.

The first is Rev. Dr. Zenan M. Corbé, my pastor in Philadelphia, whose consecrated life inspired me to take up the service of the church. He also introduced me into Wagner College in New York City, as a result of which I entered the New York ministry and have spent all my ministry of nearly thirty years in the Synod whose history I am writing.

The second is President Clarence C. Stoughton of Wittenberg College, whose inspiring teaching while professor of history at Wagner College led me to enter on the field of American church history as a major study.

The third is the late Rev. Dr. Samuel Trexler, who encouraged me to continue my graduate studies in American church history until I had attained the doctorate. It was not possible to secure the degree at the University of Rochester twenty-five years ago when I was serving the Church of the Resurrection there, whereupon Dr. Trexler wrote me to ask if I "would be willing to come to a congregation on Long Island, and go to Columbia University for the doctor's degree." That brought me to St. James Church at Ozone Park and to Columbia University. Later I was privileged to receive a Samuel Trexler Fellowship in order to study in Holland. This year, when the inspiring story of Dr. Trexler's life, written by his devoted friend, Dr. Edmund Devol, is being published, I am happy to be able to add another tribute to his memory by dedicating this volume to him.

To St. James Church, for so graciously and generously giving me the time to do the historical work of the Synod properly, there are no words to express my feelings better than those of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

HARRY J. KREIDER

New York City

June, 1954

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Synopsis of the Whole Story

The Lutheran Church in New Netherland, begun in 1649, resulted in but two small congregations in New York City and Albany during the ensuing half century.

Expansion began early in the eighteenth century under Justus Falckner, a notable home mission pastor. He eventually had under his care at least fourteen congregations.

A colony-wide organization of the congregations was undertaken by Falckner's successor, Wilhelm Christoph Berkenmeyer. In 1735 he gave the congregations a constitution, made provision for American ordination, and brought into being an assembly of pastors and delegates for the settlement of serious problems in the congregations. The assembly might well have developed into a synod but for the fact that the first and only one held was a dismal failure.

*

A synod eventually came into being in 1786 under the leadership of John Christopher Kunze. It took the name of the New York Ministerium.

It assumed a democratic character from the beginning, giving laymen equal rights with pastors in all things except in the examination and discipline of pastors and candidates.

There were many difficulties and disappointments, including a bitter experience over the language question and much controversy over the establishment of a theological seminary.

But under the wise leadership of Kunze, first president, the Ministerium became firmly established.

*

In the same year that Kunze died (1807) the Ministerium, a German-speaking body, adopted English as the official language of its meetings.

New problems arose. The greatest was the spread of rationalism under the leadership of the second president, Frederick H. Quitman. Another was the Ministerium's refusal to join the General Synod, formed in 1820 to bring about a union of all Lutheran synods in the United States.

Both matters, together with the lack of enthusiasm for revivals, led to the withdrawal in 1830 of the Western Conference of the Ministerium to form the Hartwick Synod.

On the other hand there were two conspicuous achievements: the establishment of Hartwick Seminary and the beginning of synodical home mission work.

*

The Hartwick Synod had barely gotten under way when it suffered a division within its own ranks. A group of its members felt that it was neither broad enough in doctrine nor enthusiastic enough in the moral reforms of the day. So the group withdrew in 1837 and organized the Franckean Synod.

The new synod was thoroughly pietistic and revivalistic. Doctrinally it held that the Bible was the source of all truth concerning faith and practice, so that there was no need for creeds and confessions.

There were three synods now.

The New York Ministerium struggled to shake off the vestiges of rationalism and to bring itself doctrinally to a position where it could at least be on a level with the General Synod, which accepted the Augsburg Confession as "substantially correct." By the time of the Civil War the large German immigration had made the Ministerium strong numerically and had assisted materially in bringing about a conservative Lutheranism.

The Hartwick Synod went on in much the same way as in its early years. It was active in the General Synod and especially in foreign missions. It participated in most of the movements of the day such as revivalism and temperance.

The Franckean Synod went all the way in its development along the lines which brought about its formation as a separate synod. It advocated all the moral reform movements of the time, among which the most prominent were temperance, anti-slavery and Sabbath day observance. It was the first Lutheran synod to take a stand against human slavery. At first rejected by the General Synod, it was later (1864) invited to unite with that body. But it unwittingly became the immediate cause of the

disruption of the General Synod which resulted in the organization of the more conservative General Council.

*

When the General Council was organized in 1867 the New York Ministerium was not only ready to unite with it, but sometimes felt that it was even more conservative than the Council itself.

But contrariwise it was not conservative enough to satisfy some of its own members. One group withdrew in 1866 to form the German New York or Steimle Synod. This group returned only when the Ministerium inserted in its constitution its adherence to all the Lutheran confessions.

A second group went further. Its members assumed an antagonistic attitude toward the Ministerium and eventually withdrew permanently. Conspicuous among these was St. Matthew's Church of New York City, one of the direct descendants of the group that brought into being in 1649 the Lutheran Church in the colony of New Netherland.

*

This only emphasized all the more the wide divergence among the synods, from the Steimle Synod at one extreme to the Franckean Synod at the other. In between were the New York Ministerium in the General Council and the Hartwick Synod, the New Jersey Synod, and the New York Synod in the General Synod. The New Jersey Synod had separated from the New York Ministerium in 1861 in order to have a synod for New Jersey alone. The New York Synod embraced the members who had withdrawn from the New York Ministerium when it united with the General Council in 1867, because they wanted to remain in the General Synod.

When the more conservative Philadelphia Seminary was founded just before the organization of the General Council, the New York Ministerium withdrew its support from Hartwick Seminary in favor of the new seminary. Later the Ministerium founded Wagner College.

*

As the nineteenth century drew to a close there emerged a movement for closer union. There were four synods: the New York Ministerium in the General Council, and the Hartwick Synod, Franckean Synod, and New York and New Jersey Synod (the last named was a merger of the New Jersey Synod and New York Synod), all in the General Synod. The three bodies in the General Synod gradually recognized that there was

not too much reason for their separate existence. So a merger of the three was consummated in 1908, under the name of the Synod of New York.

*

Meanwhile the New York and New England Synod had come into being in 1902 through a separation from the New York Ministerium. The Ministerium had become predominantly German in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the small number of English pastors had little opportunity for expression. Permission had grudgingly been granted them to organize an English conference. But conference status was merely a step, for the English-speaking group was not satisfied until it became organized into the Synod of New York and New England.

*

The three synods, the New York Ministerium, the Synod of New York, and the New York and New England Synod continued their separate existence down to 1929. Then, just ninety-nine years after the first split had occurred in the New York Ministerium, all the divisions were wiped out and the three bodies joyfully merged into the United Lutheran Synod of New York.

*

The United Synod took over and developed the extensive work of its three merging bodies, under the leadership of Samuel Trexler, its first president.

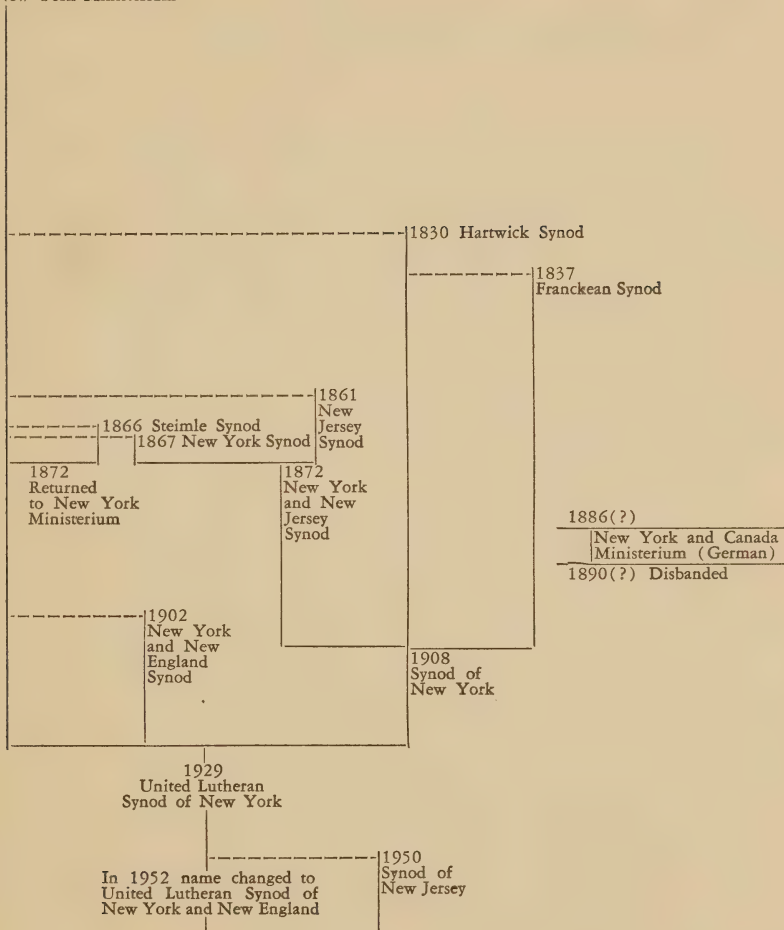
In 1952 it altered its title to the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England after its congregations in New Jersey had united with the newly organized New Jersey Synod.

*

The chart opposite shows the ten, possibly eleven synods and their interrelationship, from the New York Ministerium to the United Synod.

UNITED LUTHERAN SYNOD OF
NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND

1786
New York Ministerium



Chapter 1

137 Years Without a Synod

BEGINNINGS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NEW YORK¹

The United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England has on its territory the oldest Lutheran congregation in America, with a continuous history of more than three hundred years. Yet one hundred and thirty-seven years elapsed before a synod came into being.

Persecution Under the Dutch

When the Lutherans in New Amsterdam (New York City) and Fort Orange (Albany) banded together in 1649 as a congregation designated as the Lutheran Church in the colony of New Netherland, there appeared to be every prospect of a strong and flourishing church.

But the colony was in the hands of the Dutch, whose official religion was Calvinistic (or Reformed). So far as the Dutch authorities were concerned there was room for only one religion, and that was their own. When some Lutheran laymen in the colony began holding services, they were fined and threatened with heavier fines if they repeated the offense.

Then when the Amsterdam Lutheran Church in 1657 sent a young Lutheran pastor, Johannes Ernestus Gutwasser, to New Amsterdam, a storm broke loose. Gutwasser was summarily ordered to leave the colony. He went into hiding on Long Island, but was eventually arrested and deported in 1659. The strictest watch was kept everywhere and only a few services were held during Gutwasser's brief period of freedom. None at all were held, so far as is known, after he was deported.

¹For details, see the present author's previous publications: (1) *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 1942, chapters 2, 4, 5; (2) "The Oldest Lutheran Church in America," in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, January, 1945, vol. 18, pp. 57-68; (3) *The Beginnings of Lutheranism in New York*, 1949. The original documents are cited in full in the three titles.

That definitely crushed the Lutheran movement for the duration of the Dutch period.

Other Troubles Under the English

The Lutherans had a renewal of hope when in 1664 the English took the colony from the Dutch and renamed it New York. But their hopes were short-lived.

For four years they waited in vain for a pastor. The Amsterdam Lutheran Church tried in vain to get someone willing to go. A number of men offered themselves, but when they thought of the hardships and the small pay all of them declined.

Eventually Pastor Jacobus Fabritius was secured. He organized the Lutheran groups at New York City and Albany into separate congregations. But he turned out to be a bitter disappointment. At Albany he got into trouble with the city magistrates because he refused to show them his credentials. In New York City his conduct became so offensive to the congregation that its leaders had to request the governor to remove him.

Good fortune came at last to the two congregations when the Amsterdam Lutheran Church sent to them Pastor Bernhard Arnzius. He arrived in 1671 and proved himself a devoted pastor.

Then the congregations faced another serious problem. There was now little prospect of growth. The steadily rising tide of Lutheran immigration from Germany and the Scandinavian countries during the Dutch period had sharply declined after the English conquest in 1664. Only a small migration of Germans came into the colony during the remainder of the century, while Scandinavian immigration practically ceased.

What seemed like the worst blow of all came when Pastor Arnzius died in 1691. The two congregations waited for eleven years, but the Amsterdam Lutheran Church was unable to get them a pastor.

PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH²

In desperation the few surviving Lutheran leaders in New York City turned to the Swedish Lutherans near Philadelphia. There Pastor Andreas Rudman had recovered from serious illness, during which another pastor had come from Sweden to take his place.

² *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, chapters 3, 6.

Rudman graciously accepted the call to New York City in 1702, but further ill health made it impossible for him to continue. His release however brought an unusual pastor in the person of Justus Falckner. Falckner was at the time a member of Rudman's congregation near Philadelphia. He had been educated for the ministry at the University of Halle, Germany, which at the time was the center of Lutheran Pietism under August Herman Francke. But instead of having been ordained, he had chosen a business career with his brother Daniel in America.

Convinced by Rudman of both the urgency of the work and his own qualifications, Falckner accepted the call to New York. On November 24, 1703, he was ordained by Rudman, who had "authority to ordain" from his bishop in Sweden. Falckner was the first Lutheran to be regularly ordained in America.³

Expansion Under Justus Falckner

Justus Falckner was just what the Lutheran congregations in New York needed. More than fifty years had elapsed since the beginning of the work, and there were still only two little congregations in the colony, one at New York City and the other at Albany.

In New York City Falckner found the congregation in deplorable condition. There were but few adult members and even fewer young people. There were no Bibles, no catechisms, no hymnbooks. The little church building was so much in need of repair that there was fear it might collapse at any time.

In Albany conditions were even worse. The congregation was virtually disbanded. There was not even a church council to hold together what remained of the group. The old church building was worse than the one in New York City.

Falckner entered upon his work with consecration and vision. The restoration of the existing congregations at New York City and Albany was but the beginning. He considered it his responsibility to minister to Lutherans wherever they had settled. That meant the valleys of the Hudson and Schoharie Rivers and the East New Jersey area adjacent to

³ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 30-31, but disregard the first line of note 6. The ordination service is accurately described, based upon recently acquired records from Sweden, in the present author's article "Justus Falckner" in the brochure, "The Ordination Service of Justus Falckner, 250th Anniversary Celebration at the Convention of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, June 2, 1953," pp. [6]-[8].

New York City. He was the first Lutheran home missionary in America, and a distinguished one.

One new congregation followed another in rapid succession. Within twelve years he was serving three congregations in New Jersey and four in New York, "whom to serve," he reported, "I must yearly travel about 1,200 English miles."

During this period an immigration of Palatine Lutherans had settled upstate on the Hudson. They were ministered to by the Lutheran Pastor Joshua Kocherthal who had come with them. But when Kocherthal died in 1719 all the Lutheran congregations in New York and New Jersey, numbering at least fourteen, came under the care of Falckner. That burden he carried only three years, when he died in 1723 at the age of 51.

Problems Under Wilhelm Berkenmeyer

The congregations were fortunate to secure within two years an able successor to Falckner in the person of Wilhelm Christoph Berkenmeyer. He was secured from Hamburg, Germany, by the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam, which also ordained him.

When Berkenmeyer arrived in New York in 1725 he found conditions well-nigh intolerable. For one thing, the congregations at New York City and Hackensack had been badly split over the insistence, by strong groups within the two congregations, to take on as pastor a vagabond unordained preacher by the name of Johann van Dieren. Only the timely, sharp rebuke of the Amsterdam Consistory brought the congregations to their senses.⁴

Then too, there were at least fourteen congregations which had been under the care of Justus Falckner, and the only other pastor on the territory now was Daniel Falckner, who served the congregations in the Raritan valley, New Jersey. That meant, at best, that Berkenmeyer could spend but little time annually in every congregation. Meanwhile the German population was increasing.

The lack of pastors left the field wide open for vagabond preachers to prey upon the congregations. Van Dieren, for instance, had already done untold damage in the Schoharie congregation, and was making inroads into the Albany congregation.⁵

⁴ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 39-41.

⁵ *The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772, Records in the Lutheran Church Archives in Amsterdam, Holland* (N. Y., 1946), 143, 185. (Hereinafter referred to as the *Lutheran Church in New York, Records*.)

*Swedish-American Oversight Unavailable*⁶

On the Delaware River, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware, were four Swedish Lutheran congregations. They were supplied with pastors from Sweden, and in the first part of the eighteenth century were under the supervision of Bishop Jesper Svedberg, of Skara.

Of the pastors sent over, one was regularly designated as provost. The provost had powers in the colony similar to that of auxiliary or suffragan bishop. Provost Andreas Rudman, in order to convince Justus Falckner that his ordination in America was perfectly proper, described his power this way: "Episcopal authority to consecrate churches, ordain, etc., has been delegated to me by the Bishop [Svedberg], especially in a case of this kind."

Similarly, when Provost Andreas Sandel, Rudman's successor, was recalled to a post in Sweden in 1703, Bishop Svedberg ordered him to ordain the schoolmaster Arvid Hernborn before leaving America. Hernborn was not ordained due solely to the fact, learned afterward, that he did not desire it.

In Berkenmeyer's time the provost was Jonas Lidman. Berkenmeyer had regular correspondence with him from 1725 to 1730. When he learned in 1730 that Lidman was leaving for Sweden, he wrote to him and to Bishop Svedberg. He asked Lidman to deliver the letter personally to the Bishop and intercede with him for the New York congregations.

Berkenmeyer pleaded for several things. First, that he, Berkenmeyer, might be "received into the fellowship of the Swedish Consistory in Pennsylvania," and that the oversight of his congregations in New York City and Albany be "in the keeping of his majesty the King of Sweden," that is, under the jurisdiction of Bishop Svedberg. Second, that no one in the colony be "recognized as a Lutheran pastor unless his call can be proven to the Swedish Consistory as lawful." Third, that "a German pastor be provided through the authority of the bishop for the German and Dutch Lutheran congregations, and sent over here through the kind-

⁶ Unless other citations are given, this section is based on *A History of New Sweden* by Israel Acrelius (Stockholm, 1759), translated by W. M. Reynolds (Phila., 1874), 195n, 219, 322, 363, 364; the letters of Berkenmeyer to Provost Jonas Lidman and Bishop Jesper Svedberg copies of which are in the *Protocol, 1703-1749*, of the Lutheran Church in New York City, pp. 171-176, 177-180, 187, 203, 204; and *Lutheran Church in New York, Records*, 101, 196.

ness and generosity of the king." The church council of the New York City congregation heartily approved the proposals.

There appears to be no record that any reply was received by Berkenmeyer either from Lidman or the bishop, perhaps because the bishop was then old and infirm. He died a few years later.

Berkenmeyer therefore went ahead on his own. Appeals to Europe resulted in the arrival by 1734 of three pastors, one from the old Hamburg Lutheran Church in London and two from the Lutheran Church in Hamburg, Germany. Four parishes emerged, one in the Raritan valley, New Jersey, and three in New York: the lower Hudson, the central Hudson, and the upper Hudson valley. In 1743 another pastor came from Hamburg, to settle in the fifth parish in the Schoharie and Mohawk valleys. Berkenmeyer himself settled in the upper Hudson valley parish.

By 1750 the five parishes embraced twenty-three known congregations.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Amsterdam Lutheran Church Constitution the Basis

Berkenmeyer meanwhile worked on a constitution for the congregations. He used the constitution of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam as a model and adapted it to colonial needs. He had it ready in 1735.⁷

The matter of vagabond preachers was decisively settled by declaring that the congregations were to accept only "orthodox" pastors who came from the consistories of Hamburg, London, or Amsterdam, "or from other orthodox academies and ministeriums."

American Ordination

The constitution provided also for American ordination, and in this Berkenmeyer simply followed the practice of the Lutheran Church in Holland, and particularly in Amsterdam.

When a congregation desired to call an unordained man who resided in the province, it was to make known its intention to the consistory (church council) at New York City and to the neighboring pastors and councils. All of these were to pass on the candidate's orthodoxy, life and conduct, and ability to preach. If he were found satisfactory in these preliminary tests he was to be licensed to preach for one year, without compensation except traveling expenses.

⁷ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, Chapter 6.

The New York City consistory was then to secure further evidence of the candidate's character and training from European consistories or from universities at which he had studied. If the evidence were found satisfactory and he had proved himself capable during his year's licensure, the congregation might then issue a formal call. Thereupon he was to be "examined, ordained and inducted" into his office.

Should there be but one Lutheran pastor in New York the candidate was to be ordained by the "Swedish consistory in Pennsylvania." But if there were several pastors in the colony the ordination could take place "in the congregation extending the call, or in the consistory of New York City, by the delegates (pastors) from the three neighboring congregations." Nothing was said about securing the approval of a European ecclesiastical body.⁸

The Problem of American Oversight

Berkenmeyer's great problem was to provide for some kind of oversight of the congregations to be exercised in this country. The Lutheran Church in the colony had been brought into being by the laymen, without ministerial assistance or oversight. Consequently the relationship of the colonial congregations with the Amsterdam Consistory was always purely fraternal. The Amsterdam Consistory never exercised any oversight except in making decisions on specific questions voluntarily brought to it by the congregations. In ordaining and commissioning a pastor for the colony, for example, the Amsterdam Consistory did so solely "pursuant to the power conferred upon this Consistory" by the New York congregations. The power was of course exercised only by the laymen, whenever there was a vacancy in the pastorate. That meant strong lay power in the congregations.

There was no Lutheran synod similar to those in America today, in which pastors and laymen have full rights, to serve as a model. European ministeriums were purely what the name implies—ecclesiastical bodies of ministers only. That is what Henry Melchior Muhlenberg established in Pennsylvania thirteen years later, in the body which took the name of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. But Berkenmeyer could hardly have proposed such a body for New York, where lay power was so strong.

There was a synod in the Netherlands, it is true, composed both of

⁸ In chapter 2, article 2, of the constitution for congregations. *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, chapter 6, section 2.

pastors and laymen, but it was a feeble affair. Its general consistory had become so impotent that its powers had gradually been taken over by the consistory of the Lutheran Church in Amsterdam. The transfer of power had occasioned no disturbance because the Amsterdam Consistory had frequently been called on by other congregations for counsel and financial assistance and thus had acquired influence far greater than that of the general consistory.⁹ Pastors Gutwasser, Fabritius, Arnzius and Berkenmeyer, called to serve in New York, were all ordained or commissioned not by the synod in the Netherlands but by the Amsterdam Consistory.

If Berkenmeyer did not see the wisdom of creating a synod such as in the Netherlands, one might expect that he would have provided at least for a superintendent, similar to the office of provost among the Swedes along the Delaware. But how would such a superintendent obtain his office? The only way would be by election by the colonial pastors and lay delegates. Had Berkenmeyer gone that far he would be back to a body similar to a synod, and if a synod was so feeble in the Netherlands, was there any assurance that a similar body would be any better in New York?

On the other hand, Berkenmeyer could hardly grant to the consistory, or church council, of any of the congregations, as at New York City, powers such as the Amsterdam Consistory had. Berkenmeyer knew from personal experience that it would have been entirely unacceptable to the other congregations. His own call had been signed only by the consistory of the New York congregation, in order to get it off to Holland more promptly. But when the congregations at Albany and Hackensack heard about it, they were furious because they had not been consulted, and for a while it looked as if they would refuse to accept Berkenmeyer.¹⁰

For all these reasons, Berkenmeyer did the only thing that seemed possible. He simply left the congregations as independent as they had always been, and bound them by his constitution only to call regularly ordained pastors or to ordain those who were properly qualified.

An Assembly of Pastors and Delegates

In the case of unusual difficulties within a congregation which could

⁹ J. Loosjes, *Geschiedenis der Luthersche Kerk in de Nederlanden* ('s-Gravenhage, 1921), 97-98, 146-147.

¹⁰ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 39-41.

not be settled by the congregation itself, or difficulties arising between several congregations, Berkenmeyer provided for the calling together of the pastors and lay delegates to take up the problem. But the powers of such an assembly were extremely limited.

All that Berkenmeyer provided for was the calling of an assembly of pastors and lay delegates in emergencies. The constitutional provision put it this way: "If . . . in any of our congregations . . . any unexpected question or difference should arise," which "cannot be adjusted among [the members] themselves or with other congregations," such problems would "have to be settled and determined" by a "classical assembly" of pastors and delegates called together for that purpose. If such an assembly could not reach a satisfactory decision, appeal was to be made to a European consistory and the latter's decision would be final. "Only upon these two conditions," the constitutional article concluded, "and not otherwise, shall classical meetings be convoked."¹¹

The term "classical meeting," that is, meeting as a classis, or as Berkenmeyer more frequently called it, the "classical assembly," is a Reformed, not a Lutheran term in church government. It was however sometimes used among the Lutherans in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, when "classis" referred to a limited circle or area, and "synod" to a general circle or area, the same as among the Reformed.

Perhaps what Berkenmeyer had in mind by his "classical assembly" was something similar to the emergency classical meeting in the Dutch Reformed Church of New York in 1675. In that year Governor Andros summoned the four Dutch Reformed ministers to convene as a classis in order to perform a much-needed ordination. It was an emergency, for much time would have been consumed in the long process of getting approval from the Dutch Reformed Classis of Amsterdam. So the ordination took place, and the Amsterdam classis later approved the act, but there were no more meetings held until a regularly constituted classis was organized in 1747.¹²

Berkenmeyer added some confusion to the term "classical assembly" by calling it at times a "synod," and on occasion referring to himself as "president and secretary of the Synod" (the two offices being vested in

¹¹ In chapter 2, article 6, of the same constitution. *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, chapter 6, section 3.

¹² *Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York* (Albany 1901-16, 7 vols.), 1:731, 737; Edward T. Corwin, *A Manual of the Reformed Church in America*, 4th edition revised, 102-105.

one person). It is doubtless due to the latter usage that some American Lutheran historians have interpreted the Assembly of 1735 as the first Lutheran synod in America.¹³ But Berkenmeyer's use of the title "President of Synod" referred only to his election as presiding officer of the Assembly of 1735. He apparently did not use it afterward in any matter not directly connected with the transactions of that meeting.

The provision in the colonial constitution for congregations did not create a synod, if a synod is to be defined as a "confederacy of congregations, united permanently under a constitution, prescribing regular meetings and a system of oversight and administration under officers," and to it is committed "the examination and ordination of all candidates for the ministry."¹⁴ The Assembly qualified in not one of these specifications, for it could be called only in emergencies upon two conditions, namely, when the members or the congregations could not agree among themselves, and when they promised to abide by its decisions subject to appeal to a consistory in Europe.

THE ASSEMBLY THAT MIGHT HAVE BECOME A SYNOD¹⁵

The First Assembly

The first "classical assembly" was convened in 1735 to settle a serious controversy in the Raritan, New Jersey, parish which involved the pastor, Johann August Wolf. The parish accused Wolf of gross incompetence and it wanted to be rid of him. Wolf maintained that the contract made with him gave the congregation no power of dismissal without his consent or the approval of the courts.

Berkenmeyer was called upon to settle the controversy. The means was at hand, in the new constitution for congregations which provided for the calling of an assembly of delegates meeting as a classis. Berkenmeyer convened the assembly on August 20 in the Old Mountain Church near Pluckemin, New Jersey, one of the congregations served by Wolf. There

¹³ Augustus L. Gräbner. *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika* (St. Louis, 1892, only vol. 1 published), 193-97; Chr. Otto Kraushaar, *Verfassungsformen der Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas*, (Gütersloh, 1911), 221-24; Karl Kretzmann, "The First Lutheran Synod in America," in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 1935, vol. 8, pp. 33-36, 76-84.

¹⁴ Henry E. Jacobs. *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York, 1899), 125, wherein he also refers to the assembly as "a conference of the pastors and representatives of the congregations." Also the article "Synods," in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. by H. E. Jacobs and J. A. W. Haas (New York, 1899), p. 478.

¹⁵ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, chapters 6-8.

were present three pastors, Berkenmeyer, Wolf, and Michael Christian Knoll of the Lower Hudson parish, together with nine lay delegates, four from Knoll's parish and five from Wolf's parish. Also present were other officers and members of the local parish. Berkenmeyer was elected president and secretary of the meeting.

Berkenmeyer had prepared for the meeting a series of propositions which he called the *Points for Consideration* and which he presented as the agenda of the meeting.

Summarized, these propositions stated that (1) a pastor cannot resign at his pleasure; (2) a congregation cannot dismiss a pastor; (3) any decision to censure or remove a pastor must be subject to appeal by a higher body at home or abroad; (4) a pastor unlawfully dismissed should not leave; (5) not preaching from memory is no cause for dismissal; (6) the Raritan parish would establish a bad precedent in dismissing its pastor; (7) the Raritan congregation should first reinstate its pastor, then endeavor to adjust the difficulties, and if no settlement be arrived at, to request the Ministerium at Hamburg to render judgment.

The propositions brought forth mutterings and protests from the delegates of Wolf's parish. They had not come to talk about the matter; they had come to get rid of Wolf. They especially did not want to listen to Berkenmeyer's views, which favored Wolf as over against the people. But Berkenmeyer remained firm in pressing for the acceptance of his propositions. The majority of members finally gave in, but they refused to agree to pay any arrears in salary which Wolf might claim.

After the details had been agreed upon, Berkenmeyer presented the minutes for approval so that the formal agreement of settlement could be drawn up and signed. Among other details, the minutes stated that Wolf was to give more careful attention to the school, to confirmation and the instruction of the young, and to preach "from memory" four weeks after a parsonage was built for him, "under penalty of the loss and surrender of his ministry among the congregations." The local delegates with the assent of their fellow-members approved the minutes, but Wolf started the argument all over again by insisting that he be given three months instead of four weeks, and to prevent further disturbance Berkenmeyer adjourned the meeting.

The next day being Sunday, the morning was devoted to the church service at which Berkenmeyer preached. The assembly was reconvened in the afternoon and the formal agreement of settlement, termed the

Act of Submission, was presented for ratification. The objection of several local delegates to some of its terms was overcome by the president's influence, and it was finally signed by all five delegates from the parish and by Berkenmeyer as president and secretary, whereupon the meeting was adjourned.

A Dismal Failure

There were good reasons for the objections to the agreement, for it differed considerably from the minutes approved the day before, in that it omitted entirely the guarantee to the people that Wolf was to be more faithful in his pastoral duties, and the penalty clause was so modified that action on his dismissal could be taken only after the Hamburg Consistory had given its approval.

The account of the first assembly is detailed enough to understand how miserably it failed in a great opportunity. It made no impartial investigation of the controversy in order to arrive at a just settlement, but was forced to accept Berkenmeyer's prearranged settlement.

The outcome was disastrous so far as any emerging synodical organization was concerned. While the assembly was no synod at the time, it could readily have developed into one. But no further meetings were held. Thirteen years later the first American Lutheran synod was organized in Pennsylvania, and almost all the Lutheran congregations in New York and New Jersey became affiliated with that body.

The bitterness stirred up in the Raritan parish prevented the exercise of the power of ordination in New York on the only occasion that presented itself. In 1749 the Raritan parish asked the Pennsylvania Ministerium for a pastor, and candidate John Albert Weygand was sent. But when it was suggested by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg of the Ministerium that Weygand be ordained in New York, the Raritan people answered emphatically that "they would have nothing to do with the New York pastors," but wanted him to be ordained in Pennsylvania.

Congregations Look to Pennsylvania Ministerium

The distinction of creating the first American Lutheran synod, therefore, passed from Berkenmeyer to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Muhlenberg arrived in Philadelphia in 1742, seven years after Berkenmeyer had convened the first assembly. He found in Pennsylvania the same need for oversight of the congregations that Berkenmeyer had found in New

York when he first arrived there back in 1725.

But Muhlenberg avoided the mistakes that Berkenmeyer had made. Perhaps he was influenced by what he saw in New York and New Jersey, for he had personal knowledge of the aftermath of the *Act of Submission* of 1735. Muhlenberg was satisfied with nothing less than a body which would have the powers of a synod.

Consequently, as soon as he had secured several pastors for the colony, he organized in 1748 the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, which met regularly and assumed the powers of ordination and oversight.

Word about Muhlenberg got around and one by one the parishes organized by Berkenmeyer went over to the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The Raritan, New Jersey, parish actually went to Muhlenberg for oversight before the Ministerium was organized. It was followed by the Central Hudson parish, when John Christopher Hartwick, its pastor, became a member of the Ministerium at its first meeting in 1748. Two years later the Lower Hudson parish went the same way when its leaders, meeting in New York City, rejected Berkenmeyer's counsel in a language controversy and called Muhlenberg to become their pastor. That must have been a crushing blow to Berkenmeyer, for the New York City congregation had been his first charge when he arrived in America.

Shortly after Berkenmeyer's death in October, 1751, the Mohawk valley congregations, hitherto in the Schoharie-Mohawk parish, also went to the Pennsylvania Ministerium. Nine years later (1760) Berkenmeyer's own Upper Hudson parish followed. That left only the Schoharie valley congregations under Pastor Peter Nicholas Sommer, Berkenmeyer's close colleague, who, like Berkenmeyer, had come from Hamburg. Sommer and his parish, of all in New York and New Jersey, alone remained out of connection with the Pennsylvania Ministerium.

But it was not all gain to the New York congregations to be affiliated with the Pennsylvania Ministerium. There was little direct oversight that could be given to the widely scattered congregations in New York and New Jersey. Muhlenberg, who was for years president of the Ministerium, had more than enough to take care of in Pennsylvania.

What the New York and New Jersey congregations needed was a synod on their own territory. But it was not until after the colonies had gained their independence that a synod in New York became a reality. That was a long time after the first organized effort back in 1649—a long period of 137 years.

Chapter 2

The New York Ministerium

The pastors and congregations of New York and New Jersey appeared to be content with their affiliation with the Pennsylvania Ministerium, despite the fact that so little personal oversight could be given by President Muhlenberg and even less by his successors. At any rate there appeared to be little or no desire to have a synod of their own in New York. Doubtless that was due to the lack of capable leadership, for upon Berkenmeyer's death in 1751 there was no leader who followed him as able as himself, and certainly none as able as Muhlenberg.

A SYNOD AT LAST

The initiative for a synod in New York came, interestingly enough, from the son and the son-in-law of Muhlenberg himself.

The first move came from Muhlenberg's second son Frederick, when in 1773 he became pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in New York City.¹

Initial Work by Frederick Muhlenberg

Frederick Muhlenberg apparently went to New York City in December of 1773.² In the same year he was credited with starting a synod, according to the testimony of his brother-in-law, John Christopher Kunze, the first president of the New York Ministerium: "I had revived the Ministerium already founded by the Reverend Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg in this [New York] state in 1773."³ But that would be drawing it rather

¹ John Nicum, "Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg," in *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*, 332.

² *Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, translated by Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, (2 vols. published; Phila. 1942, 1945), vol. 2, p. 555, col. 1, entry of December 2, 1773.

³ *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*, 490, col. 2, quoting letter of Kunze to Professor [George C.] Knapp, of Halle, dated New York City, December 13, 1800. A slightly different trans-

fine for Frederick Muhlenberg to have founded a synod within a month of his arrival in New York City.

Just who started the synod and when becomes the more confusing when we read the statement by Frederick's father in January, 1775: "I received a letter from my son Frederick of New York dated the evening of the third Sunday in Advent [December] 1774, in which, among other things, he reports that the Evangelical Lutheran ministers there will hold a ministers' conference for the first time next April, God willing."⁴

No records appear to exist of any plans for or transactions of any meeting. At any rate, whatever may have been started could not be continued, for Frederick Muhlenberg remained only three years in New York City. He had to leave when the city was occupied by the British because of his outspoken espousal of the patriot cause.⁵

John Christopher Kunze, Founder

A second attempt, successful this time, was made upon the close of the War for Independence by Muhlenberg's son-in-law John Christopher Kunze. Kunze arrived in New York City in August, 1784, three months after the ratification of the treaty which established America's independence. He was a man of high attainments and his influence upon New York Lutheranism was considerable.

A Saxon by birth, Kunze had studied at Halle and Leipzig, and in 1770 arrived in Philadelphia accompanied by his future brothers-in-law, Frederick and Henry Muhlenberg, who had just ended their studies at Halle. He became pastor in Philadelphia, and shortly afterward married Margaret, daughter of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. His scholarly attainments won for him the appointment of German professor of Philology in 1780 at the newly founded University of Pennsylvania, an office which he held in addition to his parish work. Three years later, on the memor-

lation is given in *ibid.*, p. 332, col. 2, wherein "reorganized" is used in place of "revived."

⁴ *Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, 2:663, date of January 10 [8], 1775.

⁵ He served for a short time in the ministry in Pennsylvania, but then devoted himself entirely to a political career. In 1777 he was elected a member of the Continental Congress. Later he was elected a member of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and became the speaker of the Assembly. In 1787 he was elected president of the convention which ratified the Constitution of the United States. From 1789 until 1797 he served in the Congress, being elected Speaker in the first and third Congresses. (Article cited in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, 332.)

able occasion when the University conferred upon George Washington the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, Kunze received the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1784 he was called to the United German Lutheran Churches in New York City, and in addition he was appointed professor of Oriental Languages and Literature at Columbia College, holding that office, again in addition to his parish work, from 1784 to 1787 and from 1792 to 1799.⁶

Shortly after his arrival in New York City, Kunze planned for a meeting to be held in September, 1785, in New York City, to proceed with what he claimed his brother-in-law, Frederick Muhlenberg, had started. Kunze spoke about it as the Ministerium of New York and New Jersey.⁷ But there appears to be no record that such a meeting was held that year.

Only Nine Lutheran Pastors

By the following year, 1786, Kunze had heard from almost all of the pastors in New York and New Jersey and they approved the idea of a synod.⁸ But their number was not large. There were at the time only nine pastors, in eighteen congregations:⁹

<i>Pastors and Parishes</i> ¹⁰	<i>Began Ministry in New York or New Jersey</i>
1. Peter Nicholas Sommer Schoharie	1743
2. Johann Friedrich Ries Stone Arabia, Manheim and Minden, in the Mohawk Valley	1750
3. William Anthony Graaf Oldwick, Bedminster and Long Valley, New Jersey	1760

⁶ Carl F. Haussmann, *Kunze's Seminarium* (Phila., 1917), chap. II, "Life of Kunze."

⁷ Letter of Kunze to Rev. Dr. Freylinghausen, in Halle, Germany, dated May 24, 1785, in *Nachrichten von den vereinigten deutschen evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinden in Nord-Amerika, absonderlich Pennsylvanien*, commonly known as the *Hallesche Nachrichten*, new German ed., vol. 2, pp. 790-791.

⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1786, 1.

⁹ Detailed tables of pastors and congregations, fully documented, in *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, Appendices II and III.

¹⁰ John Christopher Hartwick was not in New York State at this time. He served outside the colony of New York after 1758, and did not return to New York State until 1788. He was at Churchtown, N. Y., for a while in 1788 and in 1796. He had no connection with the New York Ministerium. *Records of St. John's Lutheran Church, Manorton, N. Y.*, certified typewritten transcript in New York Genealogical and

A SYNOD AT LAST

4. Philip Jacob Grotz	1774
Germantown, Manorton, West Camp and Churchtown, in the Central Hudson Valley	
5. John W. S. Schwerdfeger	1777
Center Brunswick (north of Albany)	
6. John Christopher Kunze	1784
United German Lutheran Churches (the merger of Trinity and Christ Churches)	
New York City	
7. Heinrich Moeller	1784
Albany and Athens, in the Upper Hudson Valley	
8. George Henry Pfeiffer	1785
Rhinebeck and Wurtemberg, in the Central Hudson Valley	
9. Johann Friedrich Ernst	1780
Greenwich, New Jersey (near Easton, Pennsylvania)	

The Ministerium Comes Into Being

While Kunze was receiving replies about the proposed synod, Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Albany was arranging for the dedication of its new church building in October, 1786. The event would be a notable one. Ebenezer Church was one of the direct descendants of the group which started the Lutheran Church in the colony in 1649. In the eighteenth century it had declined to a mere preaching point and had to worship in the little old building which had been erected back in the 1670's and which had been in complete disrepair from the early 1700's.¹¹ Now however things were to be different, for a new pastor, Heinrich Moeller, had been called to the congregation. He had been prepared for the ministry by Muhlenberg and Kunze. He was giving a good account of himself for he had revived the congregation and had built a new church edifice.

Kunze saw in the dedication an opportunity not only for the pastors to come together in Albany "for the purpose of taking part" in the service, but also "to hold a pastors' meeting" afterward. The date of the dedication was set for Sunday, October 22, and of the pastors' meeting for the following day.¹²

Biographical Society, New York City, vol. 1, page x. Concerning the parishes, present-day names are used here.

¹¹ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 25; *Lutheran Church in New York 1649-1772, Records*, 125.

¹² *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1786, 1.

Whatever hopes Kunze had, he must have been disappointed with the attendance of only one pastor in addition to Moeller and himself. The third pastor was John Schwerdfeger, who had been Moeller's predecessor in Albany. With the three pastors were two laymen, Johannes Bassinger from Kunze's congregation in New York City, and Johann G. Gayer from Moeller's congregation in Albany.

Despite their small numbers, the little group decided not to postpone the meeting until a future time. They started by electing Kunze "chairman of the meeting." But they sensed the possibility of having their work meet with disapproval if they went all the way with a full synodical organization.

So they went slowly. "Those present thought best to regard themselves merely as a committee of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church of the State of New York." They diffidently "would propose a few resolutions, which were to stand accepted as framed," and here they wisely and not so diffidently added, "if the other preachers and congregations of this state should raise no objections."¹³

Framing a Constitution

The "proposals," five in number, were nevertheless straightforward articles which would bring into being a workable synodical organization.

The first proposal appeared to be couched in the same spirit of diffidence as in the preamble, but under a permanent and aggressive president there was every likelihood that the organization would survive:

1. That now and then, whenever a sufficient number of preachers and congregations should desire it, a synodical meeting be held in this state, which meeting is to be called by the president.

Lay Delegates Get Full Rights

The second proposal was a clear-cut statement that made the new synod fully democratic, by giving to the lay delegates the full rights which they have today:

2. That every congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran faith in this state be entitled to send a delegate to such meeting, who, like the preacher is to have seat and vote, except in the examination of the theological standing of a candidate or the orthodoxy of a preacher who is accused of false teachings.

¹³ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1786, 1.*

This was far in advance of the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The latter gave its lay delegates only the right to report on the condition of their congregations, but they had no seat or vote in the deliberations and decisions. The constitution adopted as late as 1781 made clear that only ordained pastors and licensed candidates were members, and in very important matters only the ordained pastors were permitted to vote. It was only in 1792, upon the petition of the congregations of Philadelphia and its environs, that lay delegates were given a seat and vote in the proceedings, but even then the right could not be exercised by the delegate of any congregation of which the pastor was not present or which at the time was without a pastor.¹⁴

The Pennsylvania Ministerium, of course, had been organized and was operating in precisely the way its name implied. A "ministerium" is a continuing body of ministers only. When the New York body took also the name "Ministerium" it was only out of affection for the parent body in Pennsylvania. The New York body was from its beginning a real synod, and not simply a ministerium.

Rigid Oversight of the Ministry

The third proposal had to do with an ever-present danger to the congregations, namely, the inroad of vagabond unauthorized preachers. At a time when communication with Europe was exceedingly slow and uncertain, it was not difficult for a vagabond preacher with a glib tongue and false credentials to live on a congregation for months before he could be exposed for the fraud that he was.

Kunze himself might have been able to testify abundantly to this, for his congregation in New York City had back in the 1740's been split asunder by a controversy in which a vagabond preacher had played a leading role.¹⁵

The proposal therefore to supervise rigidly the introduction of men who claimed to be pastors was a genuine blessing to the congregations:

3. That those who pretend to be Evangelical Lutheran preachers but refuse to submit to an examination by their brethren, or who, if they have submitted to same, have been found unfit, because of ignorance, false teachings, or a disgraceful life, should not be recognized as Evangelical Lutheran preachers by any preacher or congregation of this Synod, nor should they be admitted to our

¹⁴ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*. 167-68, 253.

¹⁵ *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, 58-64. The detailed story is in the *MS Protocol, 1703-1749* of the Lutheran Church in New York City, pp. 269-330.

pulpits, nor be employed in the capacity of a teacher in the church, nor encouraged or supported in any way.

Pennsylvania Ministerium Constitution the Basis

The fourth proposal set up the constitution for the new synod. Since the three pastors were members of the Pennsylvania Ministerium the group simply accepted the constitution of that body and adapted it to their own needs.

4. That, as long as the Evangelical Church of this state and adjacent places in the territory of our Synod have no opportunity to draw up a constitution for themselves in a regular ministerial session and since every society must have certain regulations as a working basis, they are to regard the ministerial order (i.e., constitution) of the Church of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States as their own, all such items excepted that now and in the future shall be eliminated by special resolution or which, because of our location and other conditions, are inapplicable to our organization.

The constitution so ingeniously taken over was that which the Pennsylvania Ministerium had adopted five years previously, in 1781.¹⁶ It is an interesting document, incorporating both constitutional principles and by-laws. Here are the six chapters:

1. Of the Name and the Functions of the Fraternal Association of the Lutheran Ministers of North America. [A brief statement that the signers have organized themselves into "An Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in North America."]

2. Of the President of the Synod.

3. Of the Secretary of the Synod.

4. Of Reception into the Ministerium. [The procedure for receiving candidates, by licensure and ordination, as well as pastors previously ordained in Europe. Every minister had to sign an "article or agreement" promising to accept heartily the oversight and discipline of the Ministerium and its president.]

5. Of the Meetings of the Synod and the Business Transacted Thereat.

6. Of the Conduct of the Ministers in their Official and other Relations.

The document was long and detailed for its time. The fifth chapter, for example, had thirty-three sections concerning the synod meetings and its business transactions.

Doctrinal Position

There was no specific article in the constitution of the Pennsylvania Ministerium declaring its doctrinal position. But that position was clear from the clause near the close of the constitution which embodied the

¹⁶ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 165-176.

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doctrinal adherence expected of every individual member: "Every minister professes that he holds the Word of God and our Symbolical Books¹⁷ in doctrine and life." He would be the "subject of investigation" if he were complained of as holding "positive errors opposed to the plain teachings of the Holy Scriptures and our Symbolical Books."

A Permanent President

The fifth proposal of the organizing committee called for the election of a permanent president. The diffidence of the preamble was evident again, but the problem of the acceptance of the authority of the president was solved wisely:

5. That the present committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the State of New York is to elect a president, who is to have the same duties which are enumerated under the office of president in the Pennsylvania [Ministerium] constitution and whose authority is to be recognized, if the other pastors and congregations or the majority thereof file no objection against our choice.

The little group then went ahead without waiting for any general approval or objections and elected Kunze permanent president "as provided in paragraph 5." It was a wise choice, for the new synod, beginning so feebly, had ahead of it some grave problems which would demand the guidance of the best of leaders.

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Permanency of the Ministerium

The first problem was without doubt whether the Ministerium could continue permanently. Apparently there was not "a sufficient number of pastors and congregations" who desired regular meetings, for a second meeting was not held until six years later in 1792.

In that year the Pennsylvania Ministerium adopted a new constitution, and it would appear that Kunze used this as a reason for calling a meeting of the New York Ministerium in October, 1792, at his church in New York City. Since the New York body had adopted the constitution of the Pennsylvania body in 1786 it accepted the new constitution of

¹⁷ The Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church are: The Unaltered Augsburg Confession (1530), the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531), the Smalcald Articles (1537), the Large and Small Catechisms of Luther (1529), and the Formula of Concord (1577). When published together, the volume was titled *The Book of Concord*. Henry E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, (Phila., 1893, 2 vols.), vol. 2, 36-63.

1792, subject to "as many changes" to be made "as may please the next meeting."¹⁸

But when the New York Ministerium met the next year (1793) at Albany, nothing was done about the constitution because Kunze could not be present and the total attendance was only four, three pastors and one lay delegate.¹⁹ The following year (1794) at New York City, only two pastors and two delegates were present, together with two candidates.²⁰ But despite the small attendance the new constitution of 1792 was adopted with certain changes to meet the needs of New York.²¹

In 1796, ten years after the first meeting, the Ministerium at last appeared as a body representative of the Lutheran Church in New York. Present were seven pastors, two candidates, and four lay delegates. They represented sixteen congregations from every section of the state from New York City to the Mohawk Valley. Only New Jersey was unrepresented.²²

Official Name

Curiously enough, with so many details cared for at the first meeting, no official name was adopted; at least there is no record of it in the minutes. The only reference to any name was in the opening paragraph of the minutes, where the little group "thought best to regard themselves merely as a committee of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church of the State of New York."

Nor does the title page of the original protocol or minute book help, because the minutes from 1786 to 1799 were written on loose sheets of paper, and only in 1799 transcribed into the present bound book.

At the second meeting in 1792 the minutes open with the statement that "the meeting of the Ministerium scheduled for today was opened with an address by the president." But in several other references in the same year's minutes, the previous year's title recurs: "We members of the Evangelical Church of the State of New York." In 1793 the title was expanded to include "Lutheran": "Evangelical Lutheran Church of the State of New York."

Only in 1794 did the official name appear for the first time, when,

¹⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1792, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1793, 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1794, 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1794, 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 1796, 9.

in completing the consideration of the new constitution, the name adopted was "The German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in the State of New York and Adjacent Parts."²³ In 1803, when the constitution was again reviewed, and ordered printed for the first time, the official name was altered to read: "The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and of other adjacent States and Countries."²⁴

The loose use of the Synod's title may best be seen in the minutes when Frederick H. Quitman, ordained by a Dutch Lutheran consistory, became secretary in 1797. In his minutes from that year to 1801 he used the term "Ministerium" only occasionally. Most of the time he substituted the Dutch title "consistory." It was during his term of office as secretary that the bound minute book was begun, and the title page actually reads: "*Protokol Des Evangelisch Lutherischen Consistoriums Im Staat Von Newyork, North America*," ("Protocol of the Evangelical Lutheran Consistory in the State of New York, North America").

Doctrinal Position

Though no formal confessional position was set forth by the New York Ministerium at its first meeting in 1786, it was nevertheless committed to the "Holy Scriptures and our Symbolical Books" when it adopted at that meeting the Pennsylvania Ministerium's constitution.

But in the constitution of the Pennsylvania Ministerium of 1792, which the New York Ministerium also adopted with modifications, all references to the church's confessions were omitted.²⁵ The only references to doctrine were that licensed candidates were "to preach the Word of God in its purity according to the law and the gospel," and catechists were "to preach the Word of God in purity."²⁶ No requirement was placed upon the ordained pastors.

The confessional laxity was indicative of the infiltration of rationalism into the Pennsylvania Ministerium, through recently arrived pastors who had studied in Germany under rationalist theologians like John Solomon Semler.²⁷

²³ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1794, 7.

²⁴ *The Ministerial Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the State of New York* (N. Y., 1803), p. 3. The "other countries" referred to Upper and Lower Canada.

²⁵ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 248-259.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 251, 252.

²⁷ Henry E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, 312-13; Abdel R. Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History*, 2nd ed. revised (Phila. 1933), 115-16.

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Rationalism had not yet appeared, at least openly, in the New York Ministerium. True, the latter Ministerium did not add any confessional statement to the constitution of 1792, nor when the constitution was "again reviewed" and printed in 1803. But in other ways the Ministerium made clear where it stood doctrinally.

An occasion for such a declaration of its confessional position came in 1793 when George Henry Pfeiffer, ordained in Holland and called to Rhinebeck, presented himself for admission to the Ministerium. The procedure was simple but direct. Pastor John Frederick Ernst, who conducted the examination, presided in Kunze's absence:

In the meeting Mr. Ernst put two questions to Mr. Pfeiffer, the first being: where Mr. Pfeiffer had been ordained. Mr. Pfeiffer said that he had been regularly ordained in Holland. Secondly: whether Mr. Pfeiffer believed in the whole Word of God, Old and New Testament, and accepted the doctrines of the Symbolical Books? To which Mr. Pfeiffer answered that he believed all of this with his whole heart, and especially that the Lord Jesus was true God and man in one person.²⁸

The confessional position was set forth also in the confessional pledge (or *revers* as it was formally titled) made by candidates for ordination. Sometimes only the Unaltered Augsburg Confession was mentioned; at other times reference was made to all the Symbolical Books.

At the first ordination of the Ministerium in 1795, George Joseph Wichtermann, the candidate, made a public declaration of his faith in these words:

I most solemnly promise before my God and my Supreme Shepherd Jesus Christ, so long as my eyes remain open and I hold, in America, the office of an Evangelical minister: to remain in the teaching of the Word of God as it is declared in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, to teach and live according to it.²⁹

At the second ordination the following year (1796) the candidates George Strebeck and John Christopher Wieting each made a declaration concerning his faith in these words:

In the name of the Supreme Shepherd Jesus. Amen! I, George Strebeck, . . . affirm that, after I was found worthy . . . of performing the duties of the Holy Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, I intend to hold office in said church only as long as my brethren, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium, acknowledge me to be, in conduct and doctrine, in agreement with the Word of God and the Symbolical Books of our Church. . . . All this I vow before my God, these my brethren, and the entire congregation here assembled.³⁰

²⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1793, 5.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1795, 8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1796, 11.

Kunze was cognizant of the rising tide of German rationalism in the church, but he firmly believed that his own Ministerium was thoroughly evangelical. Reporting to the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1804, he wrote:

Of our men on this side of the Hudson, I know no one, God be praised, who denies the Lord who has redeemed him. But it is nothing less than this that men are at present doing boldly in Germany, through pulpit, life and pen—who eat the bread of the Church. God preserve us, my dear brethren, in this sad time, from apostles coming from there!³¹

He reasserted his conviction the following year in these words:

We are unanimous in adhering to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that pure and simple sense in which it was taught and explained in the primitive Church, and revived three hundred years ago by the Reformers. We all abhor the neological attempts of robbing Christ of his divine majesty, his atonement of its all-sufficient power, the Word of God of its energy, his ordinances of their efficacy, the Spirit of God of his exclusive agency in the reformation of man, and the Gospel of its pre-eminent feature, free grace.³²

It was doubtless best that he did not know that the secretary of his own Synod, Frederick Henry Quitman, was to succeed him in only three years and become the foremost advocate of German rationalism in the Lutheran Church in America.

The Ministry

Following the practice of the Pennsylvania Ministerium the ministry in the New York Ministerium embraced ordained pastors and licensed candidates. The licensed candidate was one who was studying theology preparatory to ordination. During his studies he might "undergo a brief examination in the ancient languages and theology," whereupon he was "licensed" until the next meeting of Synod in order to serve in a particular congregation or congregations. The license permitted him "to preach, to catechise, to administer the Holy Sacraments, but these acts dare not be performed in any congregations beyond those designated" in the license. He was required also to "keep a journal of his official acts and to submit it with several fully written sermons annually for the inspection of the Ministerium, and at the same time return his license for renewal."³³

³¹ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 343.

³² Letter of Kunze addressed to the Lutheran Clergy of the State of New York, 1805, quoted in *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1866, p. 10.

³³ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, Constitution of 1781, pp. 174-75, and Constitution of 1792, p. 251; *Ministerial Constitution*, 1803, cited above, p. 8.

In the Pennsylvania Ministerium's constitution of 1792 a third order appeared in the "ranks of pastors," namely, the catechist. He was licensed to preach but was not permitted to confirm or to administer the Lord's Supper. The New York Ministerium, however, rejected the catechist as an order in its ministry.⁸⁴

Occasionally the term "vicar" was used in the New York Ministerium. In 1796, after a discussion concerning the licensed candidate and his privileges, it was decided that "licensed candidates should in future be called vicars." Their privileges were then reduced to those of the Pennsylvania Ministerium's catechist, namely, "only to preach and baptize" during the term of the license.⁸⁵ The constitution printed in 1803 uses "vicar" as one of the two ranks of the ministry.⁸⁶ But the term did not come into general use. It was rarely used in the minutes, while the term "candidate" continued to be used regularly.

Ordained pastors came from two sources, namely, the Lutheran countries of Europe and the Pennsylvania Ministerium. Those ordained in Europe were admitted by a two-thirds vote of the ministers present in a ministerial session.⁸⁷ Those ordained by the Pennsylvania Ministerium were practically automatically received because of the close ties between the New York and Pennsylvania bodies. As a matter of fact most of the New York pastors held membership in both bodies. The three founders of the New York Ministerium, Kunze, Moeller and Schwerdfeger, all retained their membership in the Pennsylvania Ministerium until their death.

Licensed candidates had only limited privileges in the meetings of the New York Ministerium. When "questions on weighty cases of conscience are to be debated and decided, the ordained ministers only give their voice."⁸⁸

Prior to the organization of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1748 and for some years thereafter, candidates for ordination had received their training in theology in Europe, usually at a university under the supervision of a ministerium or consistory. But more and more it became customary for them to be trained in America, under a pastor "possessing

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 251-52; *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1792, 3.

⁸⁵ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1796, 10.

⁸⁶ *Ministerial Constitution*, 1803, cited above, p. 8.

⁸⁷ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, Constitution of 1792, p. 251. This was not changed by the New York Ministerium. *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1792, 3; 1794, 7.

⁸⁸ *Ministerial Constitution*, 1803, cited above, p. 7.

the requisite qualifications, time and opportunity."³⁹ Kunze was an outstanding teacher of young men for the ministry.

Ordination and Installation

The New York Ministerium recognized the necessity of thorough training and in 1800 decided that "in future no candidates shall be ordained who have not had a thorough course of studies."⁴⁰ The following year it was decided that all candidates were to be thoroughly examined by an examiner appointed by the president. The examiner might use up to an hour; after that, each ordained minister present might use fifteen minutes in further examination of the candidate. The examination embraced:⁴¹

1. Exegesis or Bible interpretation which includes an examination in the original languages. The appointed examiner will therefore give them (the candidates) a day before the examination, a passage from the Bible which they are to translate into Latin and then explain in German or English. The passage is to be so chosen, that the examiner will have an opportunity to test the candidate in archeology and criticism.
2. Church history, especially of the Reformation period and more recent times, in connection with which it is to be especially determined whether they are acquainted with the objections of the enemies of Revelation and know how to refute them, and have a knowledge also of the teachings of the various sects in this country.
3. Dogmatics, Symbolics.
4. Philosophical and Christian ethics and some of the history of ancient philosophy.

The ordination service appeared to have been quite simple. The candidate, or one of them if there were several, preached the sermon, after which he read his *revers* or declaration of faith. After a sermon by the president the candidate was ordained by the laying on of hands by all the ministers present. Here is a description of the service held in 1796 when candidates George Strebeck and John Christopher Wieting were ordained. This is one of the few times the term "vicar" was used:

In the afternoon vicar Strebeck preached in German on Isaiah 3, verse 10, and pictured to the assembly the blessed state of the just. After the sermon the Senior asked the vicars Mr. Strebeck and Wieting to come forward, and after the Senior had delivered a touching address on Romans 12 verse 11 (Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord), in keeping with the impor-

³⁹ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, Constitution of 1792, p. 250.

⁴⁰ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1800, 21.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1816, 63.

tance of the occasion, both vicars were ordained and consecrated for the work of the gospel by the laying on of hands on the part of the Senior and all other attending brethren, while an unusually large number of people were in attendance.⁴²

Communion for the ordinands apparently was not part of the service in the early years. The earliest record of such is in 1816.⁴³

Whether the custom of installing newly ordained men obtained from the beginning is not stated, but in 1803 it was decided that "if at all possible, the young preachers be in future inducted or installed in their congregations by a neighboring pastor."⁴⁴

Officers

At the first meeting in 1786 only a president was elected. Kunze, elected to that office, remained president for twenty-one years until his death in 1807.

A secretary was elected at the second meeting, held in 1792. Only a pastor might be elected to this office.

In the same year (1792) the Ministerium added the office of "senior," the same as in the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The New York Ministerium merely combined the officer of senior with that of president, so that President Kunze was thereafter referred to as "senior" as frequently as "president."

The first treasurer was elected in 1798. He "must be a pastor," it was decided that year, because apparently pastors would "always attend" the meetings.

The secretary and treasurer were elected annually. There is no mention in the minutes of any annual election of the president and senior. It appeared to be taken for granted that Kunze was president permanently.

Meetings

The Ministerium normally met annually, usually in September or October, though sometimes in the spring or early summer about the beginning of the Trinity season. The pastors and delegates would arrive on Saturday. Sunday was devoted to three services, morning, afternoon and evening. The president usually preached at the morning service;

⁴² *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1796, 11.* President Kunze had the title also of Senior; see text below under "Officers."

⁴³ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1816, 65.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid., 1803, 34.*

other pastors at the remaining services. Monday and Tuesday were devoted to business.⁴⁵

Occasionally this varied, as in 1796 at Rhinebeck, when a five-day meeting was held beginning on Thursday. But this was doubtless due to the bad internal troubles in the Rhinebeck Church, which the Ministerium had great difficulty straightening out.⁴⁶ The constitution of 1803 directed that at synodical meetings:

Divine service shall be performed three times on the Sabbath, and every other day in the evening. But in the country, evening service is to be omitted, and to be supplied by a service on Monday morning when it is convenient, after which service the business of the Ministerium shall immediately commence.⁴⁷

Meeting over a Sunday occasioned criticism from some congregations, for they would have to forego services for that Sunday. But the Ministerium felt differently about it. In times when traveling was so difficult and communication so slow, the pastors well merited one time a year when they might be associated with fellow-pastors at the Sunday services. So at the third meeting in 1794 the Ministerium expressed its will forcefully:

That among all the congregations everywhere, which are connected with the Ministerium, it is to be the custom, as it could not of course be otherwise, that congregations which call a pastor be satisfied not to have any service on those Sundays on which the pastor is in duty bound to attend the Ministerial meeting.⁴⁸

Congregations were expected to pay the traveling expenses of both pastor and lay delegate to the meetings of the Ministerium. When some of the congregations did not do this the Ministerium directed its secretary to "recommend" to them to comply.⁴⁹

No mention was made of the liturgy and hymnal used at the synodical services. The New York Ministerium in 1796 approved the liturgy and hymnal of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and urged the pastors "with united efforts to endeavor to introduce" them "in the congregations."⁵⁰ It is likely that this was carried out but there appears to be no record concerning it.

⁴⁵ The opening paragraph of most of the annual minutes in the *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, from 1792, together with a closing paragraph from 1796, indicate when, where, and the days of the week the meetings were held.

⁴⁶ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1796, 9ff.

⁴⁷ *Ministerial Constitution*, 1803, cited above, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1794, 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1798, 15.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1796, 10.

It might be expected that coming together for a Sunday the communion would be administered. But there is only one reference in the early minutes that it was so administered, namely, in 1803. Even then it was doubtless because the Ministerium met at Rhinebeck at the time the new church building there was dedicated. The dedication service was held in the morning and "following the morning service the Holy Communion was administered," for which the preparatory service had been held the day before.⁵¹

The earliest reference to the communion as a part of the synodical meeting is in 1816 in the thirtieth year of the Ministerium. It was in connection with the ordination service, when, after the laying on of hands, "the Eucharist was celebrated, in which all the ministers and the candidates present partook."⁵² While the Constitution of 1803 provided that "divine service shall be performed three times on the Sabbath," no mention was made of the communion.

Language

The Ministerium was a German-speaking body. The congregations were German-speaking and so were the pastors. A few congregations, consisting of descendants of the Dutch-speaking members of the seventeenth century, still had some Dutch services. The only congregation in which English appeared to be asked for was the one in New York City. But when Kunze wanted an English assistant pastor in his congregation in 1794, as related in the section below, he could find no Lutheran candidate anywhere who was trained in English, and had to take on a young man brought up in the Methodist Church.

All synodical services and meetings therefore were in German with only rare exceptions. From about 1800 there was an occasional English sermon by one of the newly ordained young men trained in English. At one meeting, in 1804 at Troytown, all three languages were used in the services. Sunday morning President Kunze preached in German; Monday morning Philip Mayer, a student of Kunze's, preached in English; and that afternoon Secretary Frederick Quitman preached in Dutch.⁵³

There was, however, a growing demand for a good English translation of Luther's Catechism and for an English hymnal. To Kunze himself was

⁵¹ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1803, 32.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1816, 65.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1804, 35.

attributed an English translation of the Catechism published in 1785 of 17 pages. It embraced two sections. The first contained the five parts of the Catechism but without Luther's explanations; the second contained a brief outline of doctrine with proof texts.⁵⁴ There were apparently also in use some other English translations of the Catechism, but they did not agree in translation and they were difficult to get. Consequently in 1803 the Ministerium decided to do something on its own about the need, and appointed Secretary Quitman and Kunze's English-trained assistant, George Strebeck, a committee to prepare and publish a new English translation.⁵⁵

The committee was at the same time, the Ministerium directed, to "be mindful of gathering [hymns for] a hymnbook in the English language for our congregations, and having it printed." Kunze had back in 1795 published the first English Lutheran hymnal in this country, titled *A Hymn and Prayer Book. For the use of such Lutheran Churches as use the English Language*.⁵⁶ Strebeck had assisted him in translating the liturgy of the Pennsylvania Ministerium as well as Luther's Catechism, both of which were included in the hymnal. It is not stated in the minutes of the New York Ministerium why Kunze's work was not to be reprinted, but doubtless the Ministerium felt it wanted an entirely new hymnal.

Work on the English Catechism was delayed because of the suspension of Strebeck for misconduct, as detailed below. Philip Mayer was put in Strebeck's place. The translation was completed and the Catechism published before 1806. Previously the Ministerium had adopted it officially by stating that "this Catechism is to be used in all Evangelical Lutheran congregations where the English language is needed."⁵⁷

No further mention was made for some years about the new English hymnal.

⁵⁴ *The Rudiments of the Shorter Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther. Appointed for the Instruction of Children and Young People. Published in English, Chiefly for the Use of those of the Lutheran Congregations in America. To which is annexed, an Abridgement of the Principles of the Evangelical Religion.* Phila.: Printed by M. Steiner, 1785. 17 pp. (Note on flyleaf of the copy in the Lutheran Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pa., says that this was Kunze's Catechism, on the authority of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.)

⁵⁵ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1803, 33-34.*

⁵⁶ The title page continued: *Collected by John C. Kunze, D.D., Senior of the Lutheran Clergy in the State of New York.* N. Y.: printed and sold by Hurtin and Commandinger, 1795, pp. viii, 305, 163. Copy in Library of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

⁵⁷ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1804, 36, 42.* Strebeck had meanwhile published an English translation of the Catechism for the benefit of his English-speaking congregation. *Ibid.*, 36.

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Finances

It sounds incredible, but it was twelve years before the matter of finances was given any attention. And how slight did they regard the needs! No missions, no education; just a mite for incidental administrative expenses. Here are the quaint decisions made at the 1798 meeting:

1. Resolved that this Consistory consider the establishment of a small treasury as indispensable.

2. Resolved that if the various church councils agree to it each of the united congregations should make an annual contribution to such a fund of not less than one dollar.

3. That such contributions be paid by the pastor or delegate at every convention.

4. That a treasurer be elected for this purpose who must be a pastor, for the reason that these always attend [the synodical meetings].

5. That whatever be necessary, in our common affairs [official business], in the way of paper, ink, books, as well as postage, be counted among the chief expenses.⁵⁸

The treasury was put into operation at the meeting the following year, 1799. The "contributions" from the five pastors and five lay delegates, representing about ten congregations, amounted to \$8.50. The next year (1800) one congregation gave \$10.00, an amount big enough to get special mention in the minutes. After the "payment of all debts" there was a balance of \$13.24. By 1804 the balance had jumped to \$49.33. The following year (1805) the contributions reached a new high of \$31.85, and a year later the balance had soared to \$83.09½.⁵⁹

In 1807 the first breakdown was reported of individual congregational contributions. The highest was \$3.00, of which there were two, one from Kunze's big congregation in New York City, the other from Philip Grotz's congregation in Stone Arabia. The others ranged from \$1.50 down to \$1.00 each. The total from fifteen congregations was \$21.85.⁶⁰

LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY

Language Problem in New York City Congregation

A major problem in the Ministerium had to do with the introduction of English into the New York City congregation.

Kunze was a German-speaking pastor, but when he came to New

⁵⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1798, 15.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1799, 16; 1800, 21; 1804, 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1807, 45-46.

York City he recognized that English preaching should be added to the German. He himself tried to preach in English but he had difficulty with the language. Tradition has it that on one occasion he preached upon the text "God is not willing that any should perish." Some mischievous young men listening at the church door ridiculed Kunze's pronunciation of English and circulated the story that they had heard Kunze say from the pulpit that "God is not a villain." When Kunze learned of the story he preached no more in English.⁶¹

Kunze's only hope was to secure an English-trained assistant. But while the Lutheran Church was already more than one hundred and thirty years old in this country, Lutheran pastors trained in English were still rare. Kunze's hope therefore had to go unfulfilled for nearly a decade.⁶²

It was not until 1794 that Kunze learned of an available candidate in the person of George Strebeck, who had been confirmed as a Lutheran in Baltimore, Maryland, but had afterward connected himself with the Methodist Church. He had then become an itinerant preacher in that church but had not been ordained. Upon his marriage however he felt that he could no longer continue as an itinerant preacher.⁶³

Kunze interviewed Strebeck and found, "as much as can be determined in a brief examination, that he had not given up the principles of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church." He then offered him the position of assistant.

Upon further testing, Kunze became so favorably impressed with the young man that he recommended him to the Ministerium of New York, whereupon in October, 1794, he was licensed "to perform all ministerial acts, under the supervision of the Senior."⁶⁴

Strebeck's work the ensuing two years was acceptable and he was approved for ordination by the Ministerium.

In connection with his ordination, Strebeck signed the declaration of faith which has already been quoted. With respect to his loyalty to the

⁶¹ Letter of Philip F. Mayer, a theological student of Kunze's, dated June 7, 1852, in Wm. B. Sprague, *Annals of The American Pulpit* (N. Y., 1869), 58.

⁶² The story is told in detail in the present author's article, "The English Language Schism in the Lutheran Church in New York City, 1794-1810," in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, January, 1948, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 50-60; reprinted separately under same title, 12 pp.

⁶³ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1794, 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* The "Senior" was President Kunze.

Ministerium he vowed the following, then proceeded promptly to violate it in a way that threw the Synod into an uproar:

Furthermore, that I will not interfere with the rights of any of my brethren, nor without their desire or consent accept a call from dissatisfied or seditious persons of such a congregation, nor perform any single ministerial act which rightfully belongs to such brethren. That I will submit to the admonition of the honorable Ministerium, and while this is not in session to that of the Senior of the same. All this I vow before my God.⁶⁵

Brazen English Language Schism

Strebeck made his solemn declaration in September, 1796, and just nine months later, in June, 1797, a schismatic English Lutheran congregation under his leadership was incorporated. Kunze apparently was kept wholly in the dark about the schism until it had taken place. It is not difficult to picture his chagrin, yet in his graciousness he expressed his feelings in no more violent language than that his youthful assistant had been "ungrateful toward his teacher."⁶⁶

When the Ministerium met in September there was no question about the indignation which the members felt over the schism.⁶⁷ Strebeck was present, together with representatives of the new congregation, and they assumed the attitude that they had done nothing wrong. Strebeck went even further and haughtily sought to justify his act.

The Ministerium however made it quite clear "that it is never the custom of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Ministerium to sanction any kind of separation."

The Ministerium then adopted a resolution that has become a classic in American Lutheranism. It served as a reasonable immediate solution of the vexing problem, but it was to prove a boomerang a decade later:

Since a close connection exists between the Episcopal and Lutheran Church, and on account of the similarity of doctrine and close relationship of church discipline, the Consistory (Ministerium) will never acknowledge a newly established Lutheran church that uses only the English language in a place where the members may participate in the Episcopal service.

The Ministerium's answer to Strebeck's arrogance left nothing to the imagination. In part the resolutions asserted:

⁶⁵ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1796, 11.

⁶⁶ Report of Kunze to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, in *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 292.

⁶⁷ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1797, 12-13.

That it is an outrageous statement in which Mr. Strebeck expresses his opinion that at the time of his ordination conditions were placed before him in a surreptitious manner.

That he signed this [declaration] against his will cannot be assumed without accusing him of childishness.

That Strebeck was not forthwith expelled from the Ministerium is likely due to the generosity of President Kunze. A concluding resolution provided that he be merely suspended, and that he might be restored to his place as a member if in the ensuing year he gave no further cause for offense.

Nothing was recorded about the matter in the minutes of the Ministerium the following year. Strebeck had done nothing about carrying out the Ministerium's decision, but that no report of it was made was due doubtless to Kunze's reluctance to mention it. But a year later (1799) the Ministerium by formal vote requested Kunze "to inform the Consistory concerning the conduct of Mr. Strebeck since his suspension." The report was not a pleasant one for Kunze to make: Strebeck had persisted in furthering the schism and had completely ignored Kunze during the two years.⁶⁸

Offender is Disciplined

Though Kunze was reluctant to make the report, there was no reluctance on the part of the Ministerium to settle the matter decisively. It promptly voted that Strebeck be expelled. But once again his long-suffering advocate pleaded for another chance for the wayward young man, and out of deference to its beloved president the Ministerium decided that "this announcement be withheld until the next consistorial meeting in order to give Mr. Strebeck one more opportunity to see his mistake, to desist from his opposition, and to plead at the next meeting with due repentance for his reinstatement."

At last the idea got through Strebeck's head that he was in the wrong and that there would be no further opportunity to stall off expulsion. He must have recognized that his congregation, disgracefully loyal to him as it had been, would hardly retain him were he publicly deposed from his ministerial office. So he appeared at the meeting of the Ministerium in 1800 and after going through the motions of confessing his reprehensible conduct he was restored to full membership. Reading his con-

⁶⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1799, 16.*

fession in the light of his former and subsequent acts, one has the suspicion that so far as he was concerned it was the Ministerium and not he that was at fault. Fortunately for him, however, the Ministerium put the more charitable construction upon his statements and accepted them in good faith.⁶⁹

Upon Strebeck's reinstatement the representative from his congregation petitioned the Ministerium to receive the congregation into its fellowship. This was promptly granted upon the written assurance that the congregation would be amenable to the Ministerium, that it would never attempt to use German in its work in competition with Kunze's congregation, and that it would never receive anyone as its pastor unless he were a member of the Ministerium.⁷⁰

For a while Strebeck walked circumspectly. The new congregation kept growing so rapidly that within four years of its inception it had to erect a new building. The church at this time became known as the "English Lutheran Church Zion." When the church was dedicated Kunze magnanimously consented to preach the dedicatory sermon. The following year (1802) additional land was purchased on which was erected a parsonage and a schoolhouse.⁷¹

For just two years more Strebeck stuck it out among his Lutheran brethren. Then, early in 1804, he went to the Episcopal Church for ordination. He endeavored to persuade his congregation to go with him but most of the members refused. Those who did go with him organized St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, of which he became the rector in 1805.⁷²

When the Ministerium met in September, 1804, there was of course nothing that it could do about the man who had caused so much disturbance. A brief but strictly-to-the-point resolution disposed permanently of his case:

That the conduct of Mr. Strebeck be regarded as an illegal and unscrupulous procedure and that he should therefore be and remain excluded from our fellowship and be declared unfit for any membership in the future.

At the same time the Ministerium resolved "that the decision concerning the connection with the Anglican Episcopal Church be rescinded."⁷³

⁶⁹ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1800, 19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1800, 20-21.

⁷¹ [David Clarkson], *History of the Church of Zion and St. Timothy of New York* (N. Y., 1894), 5, 7. One thousand copies of Kunze's sermon were ordered printed. *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 8, 348-49.

⁷³ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1804, 35-36.

Congregation Goes to Episcopal Church

The only available man for Strebeck's successor was another Methodist, Ralph Willeston, an ordained minister of that church. He accepted the call and preached his first sermon in July, 1805. In September he was presented to the Ministerium at its annual meeting and there appears to have been no question about a ready acceptance of him despite the experience with his predecessor.⁷⁴ Kunze, now sixty-one years of age, had one more part in this story of unpredictable episodes, for the Ministerium requested "that the Senior solemnly induct or install Mr. Willeston into his congregation."

Even then there continued to be dissatisfaction and five years later, in 1810, both congregation and pastor left the Lutheran faith and went over to the Episcopal Church. At a meeting of the trustees of the congregation held in February of that year, resolutions were adopted which took advantage, with a vengeance, of that Lutheran-Episcopalian-unity resolution of the Ministerium of 1797, to justify the defection of the congregation to the Episcopal Church:

That on account of the identity of the doctrine, the near alliance of church discipline subsisting between the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches, the English Lutheran Church do become a parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church.⁷⁵

The Ministerium did not meet in 1810, and when its members came together the following year no action was taken concerning the defection of either the pastor or the congregation. Nothing could be done about it anyway and doubtless everyone felt it best to forget the whole unfortunate business, filled with so much bitterness for more than a decade. Even against Willeston no action was recorded; his name was simply dropped from the ministerial roll.

Out of it all came at least one long-to-be-remembered fact—that Kunze was really a grand old man, a saint of God.

A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

President Kunze was greatly concerned about an American-trained ministry. While a pastor in Philadelphia he had in 1773 started a *Seminarium* or Latin School. But four years later he had to give it up when the British troops occupied the city. He did not give up his ideal

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1805, 39.

⁷⁵ Clarkson, *op. cit.*, 10-11.

however and when in 1779 he was appointed a professor at the University of Pennsylvania he had hopes that the German Department there might attract enough students so that a distinct pre-theological school might be established as part of the University. The hopes were not fulfilled for few students entered the department, and five years later he was called to New York City.

Will of John Christopher Hartwick

Kunze's opportunity came in 1796 when the New York pastor John Christopher Hartwick died.⁷⁶ His will was found to provide that his large land holdings in the town of Hartwick, Otsego County, New York, were to be placed in trust, the income from which was to establish and maintain in that town "an Evangelical Theological Seminary."⁷⁷ The deceased pastor had been well acquainted with the ideals of Kunze but there appears to be no record that he ever consulted with Kunze about the project he had in mind. Had he done so he could have saved Kunze many a heartache.

As executors of his estate Hartwick had appointed Jeremiah Van Rensselaer together with three outstanding Lutheran leaders of the time, Justus Christian Helmuth, president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, speaker of the House of Representatives, and Kunze. It was apparent by these appointments that he had intended the institution to become national in its service of the Church.

It was a long time, however, before the seminary was permanently established, because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, which brought much criticism and disappointment to Kunze. The latter had to bear the brunt of the responsibility, for Helmuth had resigned at the outset because of his duties in Philadelphia, while Muhlenberg could give little time and died in 1801. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer likewise had little time to devote to the task, especially when he became Lieutenant Governor of New York.

⁷⁶ Hartwick died July 17, 1796, at the house of Mrs. Margaret Livingston, widow of Judge Robert R. Livingston of Clermont. *Records of St. John's Lutheran Church, Manorton, N. Y.*, cited above, vol. 1, p. x. See also above, note 10.

⁷⁷ Unless other citations are given, this section is based upon John W. Schmitt-henner, *The Origin and Educational Contribution of Hartwick Seminary*, MS. Ph.D. thesis, N. Y. University, 1934, chap. 1; and, by the same author, *The Hartwick Seminary, the Oldest Lutheran School in America* (MS. expansion of his Ph.D. thesis, prepared for publication), chaps. 1, 2. Copy of the first and the original of the second are in the custody of the Committee on Documentary History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England.

Classes were held in the town of Hartwick in 1797 to 1799 under John Frederick Ernst, but when he removed in the latter year to Pennsylvania classes were disbanded. Meanwhile, questions were raised in the Ministerium concerning the desirability of permanently locating the institution in the town designated in Hartwick's will, so far away from the center of the church's life and work.

Getting the Seminary Located

Kunze was particularly active in the movement to locate the school where it would be readily accessible. In 1800 the congregation at Rhinebeck promised generous subscriptions of land and money if the school were established there, but the proposal was not favored by all the executors and the offer was declined. The following year Kunze proposed to unite it with his congregation in New York City, but the church council there would not assume the responsibility because the estate was in such confusion that there was no telling how the congregation might become involved.

Kunze then recommended Schoharie, but the Albany congregation had been promoting its city for the location and threatened suit if Schoharie were chosen, whereupon the latter town was no longer considered. The Ministerium looked favorably upon Albany and gave its approval to the congregation there to seek funds from the congregations of the Ministerium for the erection of a building. But, the Ministerium added, the approval was given, "with the explicit condition that the High German language be taught in this institution."⁷⁸ Albany then insisted upon having full control of the institution without any oversight of the Ministerium, but Kunze refused to sign a release of the estate to the congregation unless the Ministerium retained control, an action which that body unanimously approved in 1803. At the same time the Ministerium designated President Kunze as "Professor of Theology for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this state."⁷⁹

Further complications were encountered when in 1805 the inhabitants of the town of Hartwick threatened to prosecute the executors if the school were not located in their town as specified in the will. No decision was arrived at, for Kunze died in 1807 and Van Rensselaer died three years later. The executorship passed over to John C. Knauff, a prominent

⁷⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1803, 33.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Lutheran layman of Albany, and it was not until 1815 that he was able to present to the Ministerium a complete report of the affairs of the estate.

"Hartwick Academy" is Established

The Ministerium took prompt action upon the long-standing problem. It decided that the institution was to be located in the town of Hartwick, and was to be designated as "Hartwick Academy." It was to have a board of twelve trustees, of whom eight (four ministers and four laymen) were to be elected by the Ministerium and four were "to be taken from among the inhabitants of the Town of Hartwick." The Ministerium elected its eight, and the choice of the other four "was left to Dr. Knauff."⁸⁰

So at long last was established the first American Lutheran school of higher learning. It was located, not in the heart of the Ministerium's territory and influence as Kunze had advocated so staunchly, but in the far-off wilderness at Otsego Lake, miles beyond the remotest Lutheran congregation.

⁸⁰ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1815, 60-62.*

Chapter 3

Rationalism and Isolationism

When the Ministerium met in September, 1807, in Schoharie, the revered leader Kunze was among those present only in spirit, for six weeks previously he had entered the church triumphant. Consequently "a solemn gloom overspread" the assembly and was twice recorded in the minutes. Their tribute to him was beautiful in its simplicity:

[He] had been a Father in the Kingdom of Christ to several of us, and had spent a life from his early youth in ardent zeal and industry for the Gospel Truth . . . to his last breath.¹

QUITMAN AND RATIONALISM

Frederick Quitman Succeeds Kunze

In Kunze's place was elected another strong leader, Frederick Henry Quitman (1760-1832). Quitman was a man of rare ability and attainments. Born in 1760 in Westphalia, he felt strongly the call to the ministry and studied at the University of Halle.² He completed his course there with high honor and was for two years a private tutor in the family of the Prince of Waldeck. Deciding then to go into the ministry of the church, he was ordained by the Lutheran Consistory of the United Provinces and became pastor of the Dutch Lutheran Church on the Island of Curacao off the coast of South America. He remained there fourteen years. After the political upheaval there in 1795 Quitman brought his family to New York on the way to Holland. But he liked it well enough

¹ Protocol, *New York Ministerium*, 1807, 45.

² Unless otherwise noted, the biographical sketch is from data and recollections furnished by persons who knew Quitman intimately: his daughter, his son-in-law Pastor Augustus Wackerhagen, New York's Governor William S. Bouck, and New York Lutheran leader Pastor George A. Lintner; in Sprague, *Annals of the American Lutheran Pulpit*, 115-121. Additional data is in J. F. H. Claiborne's *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman* (2 vols., N.Y., 1860), vol. 1, pp. 15-24, 29-35, 47-48, 66, 131-133. John A. Quitman was the son of President Quitman.

in New York to want to stay on. He became pastor of the congregations at Schoharie and Cobleskill in 1796, and two years later of the congregation at Rhinebeck, where he remained to the close of his life. He died in 1832 at the age of 72.

Those who knew him well spoke of his "fine commanding stature" with a personal appearance that was "impressive and imposing," for he was six feet tall and weighed about 300 pounds. As a preacher he was brief, practical, biblical and impressive. He was somewhat stern and rugged in his speech, but his congregation revered him.³ His intellectual attainments were extraordinary and he maintained an extensive correspondence with a number of learned men in Europe and the United States, among whom were President Kirkland of Harvard University and Dr. William Ellery Channing of Boston, leader of the American Unitarians. In 1814 he received from Harvard the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Numbers of anecdotes are related about Quitman, of which the following is typical. It was told by his son-in-law Augustus Wackerhagen, later President of the Ministerium:

The Doctor, being at a certain time sent by the Ministerium to allay some difference between a congregation and their pastor, spoke on the occasion, as was his wont, as a man of authority. An elderly man, being displeased with his authoritative bearing, turned to the Reverend Pacificator and said, with a taunting air: "And what are ministers, then?" "We are grindstones," was the answer, "to grind rough people smooth."

Quitman was received into the New York Ministerium in 1796. The following year he became secretary of that body,⁴ an office which he held until he became president in 1807.

Introduces Rationalism

Quitman had altogether different theological views from Kunze, in that he went all out in accepting the German Rationalism which had already made inroads in the Pennsylvania Ministerium.

Kunze had held consistently to a Pietistic interpretation of the Lutheran teachings, and when he declared as late as 1805 that the New York Ministerium was free from Rationalism⁵ he was expressing a hope rather

³ As late as 1935-1945, during which time the author visited Rhinebeck a number of times for interviews concerning Quitman and his congregation, the sentiment of awe and reverence was still strong among descendants of the people who knew Quitman intimately, and then he had been dead more than a century.

⁴ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1796, 9; 1797, 12.

⁵ See above, p. 25.

than a fact. The New York Ministerium had doubtless as many men in it who leaned toward Rationalism as did the Pennsylvania Ministerium, for just two years after Kunze's strong pronouncement Quitman was unanimously elected president of the New York Ministerium. He held that office for eighteen years until ill health made it impossible for him to continue.⁶ During all that time he was highly esteemed and in 1813 was "honored with the title of Senior" of the Ministerium.⁷

Quitman brought German Rationalism to full flowering in American Lutheran theology. This may best be seen in the catechism which he wrote and which, "with the consent and approbation" of the Ministerium, he published in 1814.

As early as 1809 the Ministerium demonstrated how far it had gone with Quitman when it resolved, with nine of its twelve pastors present, "that a new catechism in the English language, adapted to the wants of the rising generation, be composed and introduced."⁸

Four years later (1813) the Ministerium went a step further by declaring that "the Catechism shall be printed without the explanations" of Luther.⁹ In other words only Quitman's explanations were to appear.

Publishes Rationalistic Catechism

The Catechism as published in 1814 was indeed "new." Sir Matthew Hale got his name into it, with his brief treatise on "The Character of the True Religion." But Luther's name was not even mentioned. Here is the title page:

Evangelical Catechism: or A Short Exposition of the Principal Doctrines and Precepts of the Christian Religion, For the Use of the Churches Belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York.

To which are added:

I. A scriptural advice to the young. II. Sir M. Hale's character of a true Christian. III. An Address to those who wish to be confirmed. IV. A sketch of the history of Religion. V. A collection of prayers for parents and children.¹⁰

The arrangement of the five parts of the catechism was different from Luther's. "I have taken the Apostles' Creed for my guide," said the author in the preface. The order was:

⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1826, 12.

⁷ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1813, 55.

⁸ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1809, 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1813, 58.

¹⁰ Title page continued: By Frederick H. Quitman, D.D., President of the Synod and Minister of the Gospel in Rhinebeck. With consent and approbation of the Synod. Hudson: Published by William E. Norman, 1814.

RATIONALISM AND ISOLATIONISM

1. The Apostolic Creed. 36 questions and answers
2. Of The Ten Commandments. 226 questions and answers
3. Of Prayer. 27 questions and answers
4. Of The Sacraments. 28 questions and answers
5. Of the Final Destiny of Man, or His Future State of Existence. 30 questions and answers

Reading through the little volume of 192 pages, of which 123 pages embrace the catechism itself, one is appalled at the thought that youngsters should have to study it. A question like this, for example, is from the opening pages:

Q. Which are the grounds that ought to constitute the basis of rational belief?

A. Either natural perception and experience; or the authority of competent witnesses; or finally, unquestionable arguments of reason.¹¹

That was not what one might expect from what the author had assured the reader in the preface:

It is not required that the whole of this catechism should be committed to memory by the catechumen. The catechist is left at liberty to point out, for that purpose, such questions as he may deem suitable to the capacity and condition of his pupils.

Man's "reason" is prominently displayed and somehow God seems far off. We miss Luther's intimate phrases: "I believe that God has created me . . . and daily provides me abundantly, . . . preserves and guides me . . . all out of pure, paternal goodness and mercy." Rather we find the following logical, "reasoning," impersonal description:

Q. Does God possess no other attributes than almighty power?

A. Yes; he is undoubtedly possessed of more perfections than the human mind is able to comprehend.

Q. But are we not allowed in our present humble condition, to acquire a certain measure of knowledge of God's excellent nature?

A. Yes; God has graciously enabled us by means of reason and revelation to obtain a degree of knowledge of his glorious perfections, sufficient to satisfy our present wants, and to convince us that we are nearly allied to him.

Q. In what manner can we arrive to a certain knowledge of the divine attributes?

A. Reason and revelation direct us.¹²

There is even greater disappointment in the second article of the Apostles' Creed concerning the Saviour. Jesus, it is true, was taught to be "the only begotten Son of God, our Saviour, and the founder of our holy religion." But no more; certainly not "true God, begotten of the Father,

¹¹ Quitman, *Evangelical Catechism*, 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

[who] is my Lord." In place of the simple, heart-warming "redeemed me, with His holy and precious blood, in order that I might be His," we have this involved explanation:

Q. Which are the reasons assigned in holy writ for the sufferings and death of Jesus?

A. It is stated in the Gospel that Christ suffered and died, that he might seal the doctrine, which he had preached, with his blood.¹³

Even when statements seem similar, Luther's is so much more intimate. We think of Luther's "God would affectionately encourage us to believe that He is truly our Father . . . even as beloved children entreat their affectionate parents." But Quitman's similar statement is so formal and God seems so distant, for we can only "hope" to receive his kindness:

Q. Why has our Lord [Jesus] directed us to address the Supreme Being as our father?

A. To induce us to approach unto him with filial confidence, hoping for the same kind reception, and favor, which good children may expect from a tender parent.¹⁴

Take the matter of faith in Christ, so fundamental in Lutheran theology. In place of a complete trust in our Lord through which "I might be His, live under Him, and serve Him," we find this unsatisfying explanation:

Q. What is faith in Christ?

A. A firm belief in the divine authority of Jesus, and of his doctrine and promises, expressed by a sincere zeal to cherish Christian sentiments and dispositions, and to cultivate Christian graces.¹⁵

Equally unsatisfying is the explanation of the Communion. Aside from the Words of Institution, the twenty-eight questions and answers relating to the sacrament lay stress entirely upon what the communicant does, not upon what the Lord has done. In place of the blessing of "the remission of sins, life and salvation" accompanying the words "given and shed for you," we find this meager substitution:

Q. What profit does the worthy communicant derive from this sacrament?

A. He thereby strengthens his attachment of his Lord and Saviour, and his affection to his fellow-men; excites himself to new resolutions of holiness; increases his inclination and sense of his duty to promote the cause of Christ; sets a good example to those around; and renews his impressions of the saving and comfortable doctrine of the death and resurrection of Christ.¹⁶

¹³ Quitman, *Evangelical Catechism*, 38, 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

Luther's Catechism Comes Back

All in all, Quitman's catechism was a poor substitute for the Christ-centered catechism of Luther. Nor did everyone in the Ministerium accept it. In fact there was effective protest against it in the continued quiet publication of one edition after another of Luther's Small Catechism.

Even while the Ministerium was officially calling for a new catechism and deleting Luther from it, Anthony J. Braun, pastor of Center Brunswick, had had reprinted in Troy in 1811 what was called "the extant Catechism."¹⁷ The translation, though a century and a half old, is quite familiar. Here is the explanation of the second article of the Creed:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed, purchased and delivered me, a lost and condemned person, from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and happiness; even as He is risen from the dead, and now lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.¹⁸

Enough members of the Ministerium wanted this reprint of 1811 so that five hundred copies were purchased.¹⁹

In 1826, twelve years after Quitman's catechism came out, an English translation of Luther's Catechism was published by Henry N. Pohlman, in Morristown, New Jersey.²⁰ The following year, another translation appeared in Canajoharie, New York, in which the translator's name is not given.²¹ All the translations, while showing some differences, were quite similar to the Troy edition of 1811.

Then in 1829, four years after Quitman left the presidency, the Ministerium itself took action by directing its committee on publications to "publish without delay a faithful translation of Luther's smaller catechism."²²

Meanwhile the students at Hartwick Seminary, especially those preparing for the ministry, were in good hands. Ernest Louis Hazelius, prin-

¹⁷ *Dr. Martin Luther's Shorter Catechism. Translated from the German.* Troy: Printed by R. Schermerhorn, 1811. 50 pp.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 53.

²⁰ *Catechism For the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.* [By Rev. Henry N. Pohlman], Morristown, N. J.: Printed by Jacob Mann, 1826. 36 pp.

²¹ *The Lutheran Catechism; or, An Exposition of the Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, as contained in the Shorter Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther.* Canajoharie: Printed by H. Hooghkerk, 1827. 36 pp.

²² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1829, 11.

SYNODICAL DEVELOPMENT

cipal of the Seminary from 1815, was teaching his students Lutheran doctrine that was quite a contrast to what Quitman's catechism was proclaiming. His teachings were published in 1823 under the title: *Materials for Catechisation*.²³ The little volume was "a compilation of some Scripture passages, brought under a number of distinct headings, which in [the author's] estimation contain the whole doctrine of the Christian religion and morality; and embrace at the same time the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church."

The "Scriptures," he stated, were "written by divine inspiration" and "reveal God as Father, Son and Spirit." "Jesus is God, holy, without sin, Saviour of men; at the same time a man, as we are." Jesus' death "attained for us justification before God, forgiveness of sins, also a happy eternity." The Holy Ghost is "called God in the Bible" and "leads us to faith in Christ and to the moral amendment of our life."²⁴

With such an array of Luther's Catechisms and Lutheran doctrine, it was a foregone conclusion that Quitman's theology would never survive in the Lutheran Church. This however does not mean the Ministerium thought the less of Quitman as a man. Upon his death in 1832 he was acclaimed as "a preacher universally confessed to be mighty in the Scriptures, convincing, eloquent; and as a catechist few in our country have equalled [him]."²⁵

SYNODICAL DEVELOPMENT

When the Synod met in 1807 and elected Quitman as its second president it was already twenty-one years old. But in attendance that year were only eight pastors, one candidate for ordination, and eleven lay delegates. One pastor was absent. Only fourteen congregations were mentioned. In 1809 the membership increased to twelve pastors and remained at that figure until 1817. Then within four more years it increased to eighteen pastors. By 1828 there were twenty-six pastors and at least twenty-nine congregations with a communicant membership of

²³ *Materials for Catechisation, on Passages of the Scripture, Containing the Doctrines of Christian Faith and Morality. For the Instruction of Youth, especially in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Compiled by Ernest Louis Hazelius, S.T.P., Principal of Hartwick Seminary. Cooperstown: Printed for the Theological Society of the Hartwick Seminary by H. and E. Phinney, 1823. 76 pp.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-36.

²⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1832, 20.*

2,944.²⁶ But many of the congregations were quite small. The largest parish embracing Schoharie, Cobleskill and Middleburg, under George A. Lintner, had a combined communicant membership of 472. The New York City church, divided into Christ German congregation and St. Matthew's English congregation, under two pastors, had 344. At least eight congregations had less than fifty communicants; one of them actually had only eight.

Extended Bounds

By the year 1830 the bounds of the Ministerium were quite extended. In addition to the congregations in New York and New Jersey there was one congregation in Maine and at least three in Canada. Most interesting was the membership of Dr. Philip F. Mayer, pastor of St. John's English Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. Dr. Mayer, ordained by the New York Ministerium, retained his membership in that body throughout his long ministry in the Philadelphia congregation. His congregation was regularly listed in the parochial statistics of the New York Ministerium, but strangely enough it did not formally request admission into the Ministerium until 1855.²⁷

That the New York Ministerium should have a pastor and congregation from the territory of the Pennsylvania Ministerium was the outcome of a bitter English-German controversy in old St. Michael's and Zion Church, Philadelphia. The German majority consistently refused to permit English services and the controversy was taken to the Pennsylvania Ministerium for settlement. The Ministerium almost unanimously supported the German group with a resolution that incensed the English group: "We flatter ourselves to believe, not without reason, that no Christian denomination has a better system of instruction for children than the German Lutherans."²⁸ As a result the English members of the church organized St. John's Church in 1806, and ignoring the Pennsylvania Ministerium, applied to the New York Ministerium for a pastor.²⁹ Philip Mayer was sent.

²⁶ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1807, 44-45; 1809, 49-50; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1820, 4; 1828, 4-5, 7; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1829, 19-20.

²⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1830, 19; 1855, 7. But Dr. Mayer died three years later and St. John's Church then left the New York Ministerium for the Pennsylvania Ministerium. *Ibid.*, 1858, 24.

²⁸ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 359.

²⁹ The complete story is Armin G. Weng's "The Language Problem in the Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania, 1742-1820," in *Church-History*, Dec., 1936, v, 5, pp. 364-366.

Another interesting case of the extension of the Ministerium's bounds was that of Pastor John Bachman. He entered the Ministerium in 1813 but two years later became pastor of the Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Instead of uniting with the nearby Lutheran Synod of North Carolina however, his congregation requested that he might remain a member of the New York Ministerium.³⁰ Every year his congregation made a generous contribution to the Ministerium's work of from \$25 to \$50, which on at least one occasion was more than half of what all the other congregations together contributed.³¹ Only after the Lutheran Synod of South Carolina was organized in 1824 did Bachman "reluctantly" resign from the New York Ministerium.³²

Synodical Communion

The synodical communion, of which there is no mention in the records earlier than 1816, was held in connection with the ordination service. This apparently became standard practice according to what appears to be a routine resolution adopted in 1822:

That the brethren now attend divine service; that the solemn rite of ordination be administered to the candidate from Brunswick, and that the brethren unite in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."³³

Sometimes the ordination service was held in the evening, with the members of the congregation present. The communion however appears to have been administered only to the pastors and lay delegates. On at least one occasion, in 1821, when Henry N. Pohlman and George B. Miller were ordained in Christ Church, New York City, with a large congregation of people present, only the clerical members of the Ministerium communed. After the sermon the president and secretary of the Ministerium ordained the candidates; "whereupon the newly ordained ministers, accompanied by all their elder brethren in the ministry, partook in the solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper, which was administered by the Rev. President, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Schaeffer."³⁴ It was even more clearly stated the following year (1822) when immediately after the ordination of a candidate "the President administered the Lord's Supper to the clerical brethren."³⁵

³⁰ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1815, 60.

³¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1820, 6.

³² *Ibid.*, 1826, 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1822, 14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1821, 12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1822, 14.

The formal opening and closing of the synodical meetings appears to have continued quite simple throughout these early years. As late as 1829 it was stated that "the ministers and lay delegates having assembled at the appointed hour, the Synod was opened with the singing of a hymn and by prayer by the Rev. President."³⁶

Similarly, at the close of the synodical meeting, "the members joined in singing the 'Christian Farewell,' after which the synod was closed with prayer by the Rev. President."³⁷

The singing of the "Christian Farewell" appeared to be a favorite closing hymn for many years:

Thy presence, everlasting God!
Wide through all nature spreads abroad:
Thy watchful eyes, which never sleep,
In ev'ry place thy children keep.

While near each other we remain,
Thou dost our lives and pow'rs sustain;
When sep'rate, we rejoice to share
Thy counsels and thy gracious care.

To thee we now commit our ways,
And still implore thy heav'nly grace
Still cause thy face on us to shine,
And guard and guide us still as thine.

Give us, in thy beloved house,
Again to pay our grateful vows;
Or, if that joy no more be known,
Give us to meet around thy throne.³⁸

"Ministerial Session"

From the beginning of the New York Ministerium it was provided that matters having to do with the oversight and discipline of pastors were to be in the hands of the ministerial members only. The meeting of the ministerial members alone was termed the "ministerial session" or "meeting of the ministerium" as it was later called. But for some thirty-five years there does not appear to have been a separate meeting of the pastors. All matters having to do with approving candidates for ordination and administering discipline in the case of ordained men seem

³⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1829, 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1829, 12.

³⁸ Hymn No. 381 in *A Collection of Hymns and A Liturgy for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*, Philadelphia: 1814; also in the new edition, N. Y.: 1834.

to have been disposed of in the full synodical meeting at which the laymen were present.

In 1821 it was recorded for the first time that after the Ministerium had adjourned and "the lay delegates having withdrawn, the ministers remained in session" to examine two candidates for ordination. The candidates, having passed satisfactory examinations, were approved for ordination "at the public service" that evening.³⁹

The action of the pastors in approving the candidates for ordination was final and was not brought before the full synod for approval.

From 1823 the custom was established of holding the "ministerial session" on the first day of the synodical meeting, usually at the close of the morning.⁴⁰

Ministerial Relief

It was not long before a major problem of the church presented itself in the matter of how to assist the widows and children of deceased pastors. There appear to be no specific figures of pastors' salaries for those days, but there also appears to be no question that the salaries were notoriously low. When a pastor died, it was not news that his widow was left destitute.

The problem came before the Ministerium in 1809 when the lay delegates of one of the New York City churches "called the attention of the assembly to the necessity of providing for the assistance of widows and orphans of ministers belonging to this Ministerium, and moved that a Society be erected for that important purpose."⁴¹

The creation of a society to care for a particular phase of the church's work was standard procedure and continued so for many years. The society was started usually by the pastors and lay delegates of the synod, but any number of additional lay people could belong.

Prompt action was taken on the resolution for a Society on Ministerial Relief. A committee was appointed to draw up a plan which was to be submitted to the president of the Ministerium. If he approved, it was to be printed and distributed among the congregations to appeal for subscribers.

Nothing however came of it. Meanwhile the Ministerium had to do

³⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1821, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1823, 25; 1827, 13.

⁴¹ *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1809, 51.

something about an aged retired pastor, George H. Pfeiffer, living at Rhinebeck and destitute. Usually a small sum was voted for him from the Ministerium treasury. Later, a collection was taken up for him in the synodical meeting, totaling about \$75. Then in 1823 it was voted that "an annual allowance" of \$75 be appropriated from the Ministerium treasury to be paid semiannually to him for the remainder of his life.⁴²

The Pfeiffer annuity stirred the whole matter up again. Another committee was appointed, with instructions "to devise and report at the next meeting of the Synod, a plan for the establishing of a fund for the relief of aged and infirm clergymen of this church, their widows and orphan children."⁴³

But still nothing came of it. The committee reported progress, but delay followed delay. It was not until 1834 that a workable plan was set up.⁴⁴

HARTWICK SEMINARY

Ernest Hazelius, First Principal

Hartwick Academy, or as it was later named, Hartwick Seminary, formally opened in December of 1815. Pastor Ernest Louis Hazelius (1777-1853) accepted the post of principal and professor of theology.

Born in Silesia, Germany, Hazelius was brought up as a Moravian. He came to America in 1800 and for eight years taught at the Moravian Seminary at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, part of the time as its professor of theology.⁴⁵ Then he came to New York and was ordained by the New York Ministerium in 1809. Upon his ordination he became pastor of the congregation at New Germantown, New Jersey, and continued there until he became principal and professor at Hartwick Seminary in 1815.

Hazelius' contribution to New York Lutheranism was considerable, particularly at a time when the Ministerium was insecure in its faith, distrustful of a general synod, and seemingly slothful in taking advantage of a great home mission opportunity. As head of Hartwick Seminary he had the opportunity, and made the most of it, of being an outstanding leader in the reaction against rationalism and of doing an excellent work in home missions.

⁴² *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1819-1823*, and especially 1823, pp. 6, 26.

⁴³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1825*, 13.

⁴⁴ Discussed below, p. 159.

⁴⁵ Abdel R. Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 71.

Hazelius completed his career in the New York Ministerium as its president for two years before he left, in 1830, to become professor at the newly founded Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Gets Under Way

The Academy had been located in Hartwick Township four miles southwest of Cooperstown on the road to Milford. By 1815 a building had been erected with the help of contributions from the township inhabitants. It was a two-story brick school building, forty-eight by thirty-five feet, with eight classrooms, kitchen and dining room. There were no sleeping quarters; students could readily find lodgings in homes in the village.⁴⁶

The opening day's exercises were described by Hazelius in his *School Journal*:

1815, Dec. The school was solemnly opened today in the presence of a considerable number of friends. The principal of the institution dedicated this seminary in a prayer to God, and besought him to pour down his blessings upon teacher and learners. After the singing of a hymn he delivered an oration on the important influence of education on the community at large after which the annexed school regulations were publicly read, and the assembly dismissed. In the afternoon the scholars who had been present in the forenoon assembled again at 1 o'clock when their names were taken and inquiry made respecting their proficiency in the different branches they had been taught hitherto for the sake of classing them; after which they subscribed to the school regulations. Nineteen scholars entered this day. At half after 3 they were dismissed.⁴⁷

The curriculum was extremely simple that first year: English grammar, geography, arithmetic, writing, composition, Latin, Greek, geometry, bookkeeping and church history. The list of courses was gradually expanded, so that by 1823 there had been added logic, mathematics, rhetoric, French and German.⁴⁸

For qualified students who were studying theology the curriculum included Hebrew, exegetical lectures on the Bible, systematic theology,

⁴⁶ John W. Schmitthenner, *The Hartwick Seminary*, pp. 69-70, quoting architect's drawings and specifications in bound manuscripts titled *Archives of The Hartwick Seminary*, vol. 4, 1806-1812, at Hartwick College, Oneonta, N. Y.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 77-78, quoting the MS. School Journal, 1815-1830, of Principal Ernest Hazelius, 30 pp., in the archives of Hartwick Seminary, "Miscellaneous Papers." It was at Hartwick College, Oneonta, N. Y., until 1946, when it disappeared.

⁴⁸ John W. Schmitthenner, *The Hartwick Seminary*, 86, quoting the MS. School Journal of Hazelius; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1823, 13.

composition in general and of sermons in particular, and church history.⁴⁹

By 1825 the Seminary was definitely divided into two departments, "the theological and the academical."⁵⁰

Early Years

In its first seven years Hartwick Seminary had 206 students, sixteen of whom afterward transferred to other colleges. Of the graduates, twelve went into law, seventeen into medicine, and one into the Lutheran ministry. Twenty more were theological students, nine for the Lutheran ministry, and eleven for the ministry of other denominations.⁵¹ Its first theological graduate, Henry N. Pohlman, became a distinguished leader in the New York Ministerium.

Some of the detailed twenty-five "Regulations for the Scholars" set up in 1823 by the trustees reveal only too well that boys would be boys. Here are a few of the rules:

Whereas every indecent and rude behaviour in word or deed is unbecoming a young gentleman; therefore all such conduct, particularly profane swearing and striking one another is hereby strictly forbidden.

Every sort of sport, as fencing, wrestling, playing of ball during school hours, is strictly forbidden.

No playing of ball in the rooms or in the hall or jumping in the hall or on the staircase during the time of intermission can be allowed.

Complaints having been made that the furniture of the Academy is cut to pieces by the scholars, the Trustees have resolved that the scholars in the respective rooms shall be answerable for any damage done in their rooms, unless the perpetrator can be found out.

No smoking of tobacco can be allowed during school hours.

Lastly, all the scholars are affectionately and at the same time earnestly requested, in visiting scholars at the different boarding houses, not to stay there too late but retire to their respective homes at reasonable hours.⁵²

The necessity for such rules was by no means restricted to Hartwick Seminary. The problems were the same in other colleges throughout the country. The rules were strict everywhere, whether at the leading Harvard University or at the distant University of North Carolina. There were penalties for playing games at improper times and improper places.

⁴⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1822, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1825, 28.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1822:11-12.

⁵² MS. "Regulations for the Scholars of Hartwick Seminary, revised and altered with the consent of the Trustees, August, 1823," 12 pp., in bound manuscripts titled *Archives of The Hartwick Seminary*, vol. 6, 1821-1830. At Hartwick College, Oneonta, N. Y.

Absences and tardiness were punished by fines. The University of North Carolina, for example; threatened expulsion if a student "is gone several times to an ordinary tavern after night; if he has engaged in revelling and drinking, if he has absented himself after 9 P.M., etc."⁵³

But with all its stringent regulations, Hartwick Seminary was not as strict as some other institutions of learning, according to the testimony of John A. Quitman, son of President Quitman. He was tutor for two years at Hartwick Seminary from 1816-1818, then became a teacher at Mt. Airy College at Germantown, Pennsylvania. He soon lamented to his brother that

My life here [at Mt. Airy College] is very different from what it was at Hartwick. There I had my sleigh-rides, my skating, my picnics, and evening parties; here my occupation is study, and my amusement is study; nor do I regret it much. I prefer my Spanish to any pleasure. I am usefully employed; but yet I recur with regret to the charming female society I once enjoyed. It seems to be necessary to my happiness that I should have some sweet object for my affections to repose on. As I have none here, I can only sigh for those I left behind me. Germantown is famous for its scandal, not for its sociability.⁵⁴

Oversight by the Ministerium

While direct responsibility for the conduct of the Seminary was committed to its Board of Trustees, the Ministerium nevertheless exercised oversight as far as it was able. Hazelius reported regularly at the synodical meetings. In 1822 the Ministerium appointed a standing committee, and gave it a long list of instructions, among which the most important were:

To confer with the Trustees on all subjects connected with the interests and welfare of the institution; to attend the annual examinations of the students; . . . also to devise a general system by which the theological department may be extended, and thereby the interests of our Church essentially promoted.⁵⁵

During these years Hazelius was both principal and sole professor. He had one part-time assistant. There were no funds for a full-time assistant instructor, which is understandable in the light of the small income. That income consisted of the interest from the Seminary's capital fund of \$15,000, the receipts from the students of about \$450 yearly, and a small annual appropriation of about \$150 from the New York State Regents.⁵⁶

⁵³ Peter Oliver, "Notes on Education in the U.S. in the Year 1800," in the *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, Jan., 1944, pp. 24-25, quoting the faculty records.

⁵⁴ Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman*, I, 31.

⁵⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1822, 13.

⁵⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1824, 23; 1825, 29.

Despite the small income the Seminary trustees in 1826 called a full-time assistant professor at a salary "not to exceed \$500." At the same time two new subjects were added to the curriculum: chemistry and natural history.⁵⁷ Professor Hazellius was probably getting little more salary than the assistant professor, for in 1828 the total annual expenditure of the Seminary (exclusive of the salary of the assistant professor) was only \$1,500.⁵⁸

HOME MISSIONS

Small Beginnings

The Ministerium was already thirty years old before it became seriously engaged in home missions. The activity came in answer to the long-felt need of caring for the little congregations that were chronically vacant because they could not support a pastor. The Ministerium in 1818 came up with an excellent solution of the problem: it resolved to secure "a traveling minister to act as missionary in vacant congregations." But whom could it get, when it was able to appropriate only \$60 for the work?⁵⁹ This would not cover more than traveling expenses, and even then the pastor who undertook the work could never be sure that he could get the whole appropriation. That actually happened to the first missionary.

Be that as it may, the beginning in home missions had been made. Furthermore the Ministerium in 1818 started a missionary fund, to which it asked all congregations to respond with an annual collection. It is interesting to note that the first recorded donation to the fund amounted to \$30 from the congregation in far-off Waldoborough, Maine.⁶⁰

Other congregations contributed generously too. In 1823 for example Schoharie and Cobleskill gave \$30, and from the newly constituted English St. Matthew's Church in New York City came \$50. The total received that year was \$146. But even so it came from only ten parishes.⁶¹ There was by no means a unanimous missionary response. Yet despite the feeble response the Ministerium fortunately had some able men who were willing to take up the difficult task.

⁵⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1826, 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1828, 22-23.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1818, 12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1819, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1823, 8, 24.

Molther's Missionary Trip

The first of these was John Molther, pastor of the Schoharie-Cobleskill parish, who spent two months from the middle of December, 1818, to the middle of February, 1819, on the task. Fortunately he made a detailed 36-page report of his trip.⁶²

He started from Cooperstown and traveled westward. His chief concern was for some scattered settlements around the upper portions of Lake Cayuga and Lake Seneca. It was winter of course, but traveling was bad at any season. Poor roads were the rule. He would do well to make thirty miles a day on horseback. He spent several weeks with the people on the east and west banks of the Salmon Creek, who were "destitute of all church connections." They were chiefly Lutherans and German Reformed.

Molther preached twelve times to them, in various places, on Sundays and weekdays. Five times he preached in English, at which he had up to 200 people present, both Lutherans and Reformed. The Reformed were as much interested as the Lutherans. But there was little hope of establishing a Lutheran congregation, for there were only about thirty families who could be counted upon to support a church.

In January Molther arrived at Lake Cayuga at a village called Bridgeport, whither numbers of Lutheran farmers had migrated. He preached a number of times in the local schoolhouse, but soon learned that most of the inhabitants were already connected with the Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal churches.

Molther then traveled on to Fayette Township and attempted to revive Zion Church, at or near Waterloo, which was without a pastor. But he had no success. Zion's building was in such a run-down condition that the long room in the local tavern was a much better place in which to preach. The officers of the congregation did not want to be bothered about their building but devoted their time to complaining about their previous pastor.

Molther extended his trip as far as "the country beyond Seneca Lake," which took him into Phelps Township several miles beyond Geneva. He had little success there. One of the leading townsmen had previously promised to let the people know of the coming preaching service. But after Molther had traveled a whole morning "through deep and muddy

⁶² Among papers of the New York Ministerium (year 1819) in the archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England.

roads" he was chagrined to find that word had not been passed around, and that he had for a congregation only seven adults and a few children.

Molther proceeded homeward by the same route he had come. He had at least one experience to assure him his trip was not in vain. Stopping at Salmon Creek again he learned that during his absence some of the Lutherans had been busy getting subscriptions toward a pastor's salary (the customary procedure at the time) with which to induce Molther to stay among them. They had had hopes of raising about \$150 annually for the pastor, but even that sum was too much for them to get. Molther preached to them again and then "took a cordial farewell of these people who had shown so much good will and kind attention." By the middle of February he was back in Cooperstown.

Molther's detailed report was presented to the Ministerium at its next meeting in 1819. After some discussion he was voted "the sum of \$30 for his missionary services,"⁶³ just half of what had originally been decided upon.

Hazelius' Missionary Trip

A more ambitious missionary trip was undertaken in 1823 by Ernest Hazelius, principal and professor at Hartwick Seminary. He volunteered to make the trip during his summer vacation and he was authorized by the Ministerium to use the theological students of Hartwick Seminary in the destitute congregations.⁶⁴

Accompanied by Francis Guenther, a theological student, Hazelius traveled in the first three weeks of September from the Seminary northward to the Mohawk Valley, westward along the Mohawk Valley to Oneida Lake, then southwestward to Manlius, near Syracuse, then westward to Geneva at the head of Seneca Lake, then southward along the east bank of the lake, then eastward again to the Seminary.⁶⁵ The route covered some 300 to 350 miles, which was no small trip for three weeks.

Hazelius' experiences were as a whole much happier than those of Molther. Most of the places visited had Lutheran congregations but because of their small size they had no pastors. In some of the new

⁶³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1819, 7, 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1822, 8-9.

⁶⁵ Hazelius' report, 4 pp., among papers (year 1823) of New York Ministerium in the archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England. An abstract is in the *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1823, 8-9.

areas visited it was found that most of the Lutherans migrating there had of necessity joined other churches, "because they supposed it would be impossible ever to be supplied with Lutheran ministers." In others, such as the territory from Utica west to Manlius, Hazelius felt strongly that "a missionary of our Church might be usefully employed both among the German and English settlers."

An immediate result of the trip was the licensure and assignment of student Francis Guenther to two vacant congregations in Herkimer County while completing his theological studies at Hartwick Seminary.⁶⁶

Standing Home Mission Committee

The great need for pastoral care in the places visited by Hazelius was emphasized by similar reports from Pastor George Lintner in Schoharie County, and of New York City's Pastor Frederick Schaeffer concerning northern New Jersey.

As a result it was the unanimous conviction of the Ministerium that a standing committee take over this big responsibility. The committee was given considerable authority by the Ministerium:

1. The Committee shall endeavour to ascertain the number, inquire into the local condition, and examine the religious interest of vacant congregations within the bounds of this Synod for the purpose of determining whether several of these destitute churches may not be associated, to support a pastor among them.

2. The committee shall also determine upon the places and districts to be assigned to missionaries of the Evangelical Lutheran church; and specify the requisite labours and pecuniary compensation; and devise and endeavour to carry into effect such measures as may be best calculated to promote the extension of our church and the edification of the people.

3. The committee shall attend to these matters, as far as practicable, during the recess of the Ministerium, and report at the annual meeting of our Synod.

4. The committee shall have authority, through their chairman, to draw on the Treasury of the Ministerium during the recess of the Synod, for such sums from the Missionary Fund as they may deem requisite for well ordering of the business confided to them.⁶⁷

Fortunately this turned out to be a committee of action, under the chairmanship of Frederick Schaeffer, pastor of St. Matthew's Church in New York City and secretary of the Ministerium. But they soon realized that the committee itself could not do all the work. A study of the field revealed no less than thirty vacant congregations, old and new,

⁶⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1823, 9.*

⁶⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1823, 23-24.*

in New York, New Jersey, and Canada bordering on New York.⁶⁸ That was a lot of vacancies, with a total of only fifteen pastors in the Ministerium.⁶⁹

Full-time Missionary

The committee took prompt action by appointing John P. Goertner, a licensed candidate, as the "missionary and agent for the committee."⁷⁰ From that title it would appear that the committee took itself quite seriously, in that Goertner was the missionary not of the Ministerium but of the committee.

Goertner's itinerary between the Ministerium meetings of October, 1824, and September, 1825, covered the eastern and northern parts of New York and part of Canada. His thorough report makes clear to us today the great problem which the Ministerium faced. Here is a summary of some of the places visited and the experiences encountered:

Hackensack, New Jersey. Congregation had been dispersed and its church building found in ruins. Revived the congregation and encouraged the people to build a new church.

Hudson Valley, New York. Ministered to vacant congregation at Ghent. Soon afterward it was cared for by Candidate Jacob Berger. Ministered to the destitute congregation at Athens. Dr. Wackerhagen arranged to hold occasional services there.

Mohawk Valley, New York. Ministered to the Geissenberg congregation at Minden, Montgomery County, vacant for some time and suffering from the inroads of a vagabond preacher named Joergens. Ministered at Danube, Herkimer County, to a small congregation also suffering from the work of Joergens. Ministered to the vacant congregations at Little Falls and Schuyler, in Herkimer County.

Northern New York State to the Canadian Border. Ministered to a German settlement near Lowville, in Lewis County. Formed a congregation there. Ministered to the newly formed congregation at LeRay, in Jefferson County, which was being served by a lay reader appointed by Hazelius. Arrangements made to have Lowville and LeRay served by candidate Philip Wieting.

Upper Canada (present Province of Ontario). Ministered to the congregations at Fredericksburg and Ernesttown. They were in a "melancholy condition" because of poor pastors and long vacancies. Goertner preached "as often as practicable, and visited the families of those who once were members." He revived the congregations, and arrangements were made to have candidate John Lawyer serve it.

⁶⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1824, 17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1824, 4-6, omitting the names of Pastors Philip Mayer of Philadelphia, and John Bachmann of South Carolina, since their congregations were not in the territory of the Ministerium.

⁷⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1824, 37, 39; 1825, 29.

HOME MISSIONS

Then went *down the St. Lawrence River*, and ministered to the congregation at Williamsburg. Several Lutheran congregations had once flourished there but only remnants were left, principally because their pastors had gone over to the Anglican Church. It was not possible to arrange for a man to go there, even, as the congregation petitioned, if "he should visit them for a short time only."⁷¹

On his return, Goertner visited other places, with experiences and results similar to those already enumerated.

Meanwhile, Hazelius was continuing his trips on every occasion and especially in his summer vacations. Each year his trips were more extended. In 1824 he went as far north as Lake Ontario, traveling 400 miles altogether. In 1825, the year in which the Erie Canal was opened, he went as far as Niagara County; and in 1826 as far as Canada.⁷² The newly formed congregations in northern New York which Goertner found had been the work of Hazelius.

In 1827 Hazelius became chairman of the synodical home mission committee and his activities in that field became more extended than ever. Actually, though not so appointed, he served as missionary superintendent. His visitations in 1827 covered all the area of northern New York and Canada previously visited by Goertner. Goertner meanwhile had to give up the position as missionary because of ill health and became pastor of the congregation at Johnstown.

The unusual missionary success of Hazelius was of course aided by Hartwick Seminary's proximity to this expanding Lutheran mission field. If there had been regrets that the Seminary had been placed so far from the Ministerium's constituency, at least it gave a good account of itself in providing men for the many old and new congregations on the outskirts. But while Hazelius may well be remembered as the first full-time head of Hartwick Seminary, he may much more be remembered as the first home mission superintendent of the New York Ministerium.

The more the home mission activities, the clearer became the need for greater efforts to sustain the work. The missionary fund of the Ministerium was wholly inadequate. That fund had actually been decreasing from year to year. In 1827, when Hazelius became chairman of the committee, only \$92 were contributed by the churches. The following year for a reason not stated it was altogether but \$50, contributed by only nine parishes. Of this \$20 was given by the New Germantown,

⁷¹ Summary made from Goertner's "Missionary Report," in *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1825, 29-33.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1824, 15-16; 1825, 18; 1826, 18.

New Jersey, parish of which Henry N. Pohlman was pastor. The strong St. Matthew's Church in New York City, previously so generous, gave only \$5; other strong churches actually gave nothing.⁷³

Because of this discouraging condition the missionary committee recommended that the Ministerium "form itself in a Mission Society, and that each minister and lay member exert himself to erect an auxiliary society in his respective congregation, after a plan to be proposed by the Synod as parent society."⁷⁴

The Ministerium's special committee to formulate the plan took its time about it. But the men of the recently organized Western Conference of the Ministerium did not like the delay, so they went ahead of their own accord and in May, 1828, organized "The Home Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church in the State of New York." But since that step is intimately connected with the organization of the Hartwick Synod, it will be discussed in that connection below.⁷⁵

GENERAL SYNOD IS REJECTED

Need of a General Synod

In the same year (1818) that the great home mission activity got under way with John Molther's trip, a proposal of far-reaching significance was being diffidently advanced at the close of the annual convention of the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The proposal had to do with bringing about a union of all the Lutheran synods in America into a general synod. It was concluded in these words:

The Synod thinks it were desirable if the various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States were to stand in some way or another in closer connection with each other, and that the venerable [Pennsylvania] Ministerium be charged to consider this matter, to prepare a plan for a closer union, if the venerable Ministerium deem it advisable, and to see to it that this union, if it be desirable, be brought about, if possible.⁷⁶

There were in existence at the time only three Lutheran synods: the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the New York Ministerium and the North Carolina Synod. But three other synods were shortly to be formed: the Ohio Synod, the Synod of Maryland and Virginia, and the Tennessee Synod.

⁷³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1827, 9; 1828, 7-8.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1827, 35.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1828, 17-18. See also below p. 74.

⁷⁶ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 1818, 517.

There was real need for a way to keep together the growing number of synods, so widely separated from one another by the poor means of transportation and communication of the time. Synods like the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the New York Ministerium had close ties, for they exchanged delegates at their annual meetings.⁷⁷ But such a practice would become more and more difficult as the number of synods increased. At best it would be a weak connection, in which the visiting delegate would make a nice speech and a nice speech would be made in return. If the delegate could not attend, as frequently happened, even that slim connection would be broken. What the expanding Lutheran Church in America needed was a *union* of the synods, in which the representatives from every synod would work together to do a greater and more effective work than the individual synods could hope to do by themselves.

The proposed plan for such a union was presented in the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1819. The idea had previously been communicated to President Gottlieb Shober of the North Carolina Synod, and to President Quitman of the New York Ministerium. Both had written the Pennsylvania Ministerium expressing "the desire for a closer union."⁷⁸

The plan was adopted by the Pennsylvania Ministerium by a vote of 42 to 8, and 600 copies ordered printed. Copies were to be distributed among the pastors and congregations of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, and fifty copies were to be sent to the North Carolina Synod. Strangely, nothing was said about sending a similar consignment to the New York Ministerium.⁷⁹ Apparently only one copy was sent to President Quitman.⁸⁰

Plan for a General Synod

The plan was formally titled "*Plan-Entwurf zu einer Central-Verbindung der Evangelisch Lutherischen Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika*" ("Proposed Plan for a Central Union of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of North America"). There were eleven items in the Plan:⁸¹

⁷⁷ Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1794, 7; *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 1820, 549.

⁷⁸ *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 1819, 528.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1819, 538.

⁸⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1819, 8.

⁸¹ The complete Plan is in *Documentary History, Pennsylvania Ministerium*, 1819, 541-544.

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1. The union shall be called the General Synod.
2. It shall consist of clerical and lay delegates from each synod in proportion to synodical membership.
3. The General Synod shall elect its own officers.
4. The General Synod shall have authority, when concurred in by a majority of its constituent synods, to introduce books for use in the service and also to improve the present Liturgy. But it shall have no power to make any change "in the doctrines hitherto received among us."
5. The General Synod shall have the right to authorize new synods, and every new synod must receive the General Synod's approval before it would be recognized.
6. The constituent synods shall retain the right of ordination and of the oversight of its pastors and congregations. The General Synod shall have authority only in cases of appeal to it.
7. The General Synod, with approval of a majority of its constituent synods, shall have the right to fix grades in the ministry which are to be generally recognized.
8. In a dissension over doctrine or discipline within a synod, the General Synod shall receive the case only when presented by a third of the clerical members of that synod.
9. A pastor however may appeal to the General Synod where he is dissatisfied with his synod's decision in a matter concerning himself personally.
10. Synods may give voice and vote to visiting ministers. But no pastor may become a member of another synod unless regularly transferred from the synod of which he was a member.
11. This plan is to be sent to all existing Lutheran synods. If adopted by three-fourths of them, a meeting is to be called to organize the General Synod.

New York Ministerium Rejects the Plan

The New York Ministerium considered the Plan at its meeting in September, 1819. The copy which had been sent to President Quitman was read twice, then a curious resolution was adopted which revealed the opposition right from the start:

Resolved, that a committee consult on the *Plan-Entwurf* deliberately and report thereon, and, in case they approve of the idea expressed in it, they either frame another plan as a substitute, or modify it in such a manner, as to them may appear most proper."⁸²

The committee, sensing the feeling in the Ministerium, brought in a report opposing the Plan, and the report after being read twice was adopted unanimously.⁸³ The committee began with this quite frank objection:

⁸² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1819, 8-9.

⁸³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1819, 9-12.

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That they (the committee) have carefully investigated the subject, and find that some of the principles of the *Plan-Entwurf* are at variance with the spirit of the constitution of the Ministerium of New York.

The committee contended also that a general synod was quite unnecessary, for any good that might come of it would be achieved "with less trouble, danger and expense by a general adoption and enforcement of the fourth section in the ninth chapter of the constitution of the Ministerium." The item referred to was in the constitution of 1816, and had to do with the exchange of delegates with the other synods.

If any other Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in the United States shall send a commissioner or delegate to attend the annual synod of this Association; such commissioner or delegate shall be received and have the right to vote in all its proceedings, as well as in the meetings of the Ministerium, strictly so called, after the business of the Synod is dispatched; provided, that such Ministerium grant equal rights and privileges to a commissioner deputed from this body.⁸⁴

This procedure, the committee continued, "appears to be the most practicable and effectual mode by which unity and concord may be promoted and preserved."

The New York Ministerium proceeded then with a series of resolutions which rejected the plan completely, and proposed to the other synods to adopt the article in its own constitution about exchange of delegates:

1. That the plan of a Central Synod, proposed by the Synod of Pennsylvania, cannot be accepted.
2. That an adoption of the fourth section of the 9th chapter in the constitution of this Ministerium be earnestly recommended to the Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States.
3. That this Synod will continue, as often as practicable, to send delegates to other Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States, and will always receive upon the same footing the delegates from other Synods, according to the 4th section aforesaid.
4. That this Synod will annually appoint a standing committee of correspondence, who shall, according to annual instructions from the Synod, correspond with like Committees of other Lutheran Synods, on such subjects as may best be calculated to promote the prosperity, the extension and happiness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

These resolutions were then ordered sent to all the other Lutheran synods in the country.

⁸⁴ *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York and adjacent states and countries; revised and adopted in General Synod, Sept. 6, A.D. 1816.* (Phila., 1816), chapter 9, section 4. The reference "General Synod" is to a general synodical meeting of the New York Ministerium.

Meanwhile the call had been issued by President J. Georg Schmucker of the Pennsylvania Ministerium for a meeting to be held in October, 1820, at Hagerstown, Maryland, to organize the General Synod.

The Ministerium Wavers

The New York Ministerium had another annual meeting before the first meeting of the General Synod, so there was ample time for any reconsideration. When the Ministerium met in August, 1820, the item was brought up again, and there appeared to be some wavering. This time the Ministerium wanted to see how things went at Hagerstown before deciding:

The secretary [is] directed to write to the Central Synod to be assembled at Hagerstown, Maryland, on the 22nd of October next, to inform them that our Synod for the present do not feel disposed to accede to their meeting at Hagerstown, to be enabled thereby to decide on the expediency or in expediency of uniting with them.⁸⁵

But after the synodical meeting was over still more wavering was evident, or perhaps it was realized that it might be better to have some representatives present at Hagerstown to see for themselves before the Ministerium made its decision. So:

After closing the session of the Synod, the ministers agreed to send a delegation to attend a meeting of the different delegates at Hagerstown, Maryland, on the 22 day of October, 1820, when and where a plan for the formation of a general or central Synod should be discussed. The Rev. Philip F. Mayer of Philadelphia and Rev. F. C. Schaeffer of New York were appointed to represent this Synod in that meeting.⁸⁶

The decision to send representatives did not mean that the Ministerium had altered its stand about remaining aloof. But the General Synod made no distinction and gave the Ministerium's delegates full privileges of voice and vote at the meeting.

The constitutional convention of the General Synod met as scheduled. There were present four clerical and three lay delegates from the Pennsylvania Ministerium, two clerical delegates from the New York Ministerium, two clerical delegates from the North Carolina Synod, and one clerical and one lay delegate from the Synod of Maryland and Virginia.

The only item of business was the formulation of a constitution. This

⁸⁵ *Protocol, New York Ministerium, 1820, 83-84.* This item is not in the printed minutes.

⁸⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1820, 11.* This item is not in the *Protocol*.

took two days and when completed it was "unanimously agreed to" and recommended to the Lutheran synods in the United States for adoption.⁸⁷

The constitution followed rather closely the *Plan-Entwurf*. One significant addition was made to the General Synod's powers:

The General Synod may devise plans for seminaries of education and missionary institutions, as well as for the aid of poor ministers, and the widows and orphans of ministers, and endeavour, with the help of God, to carry them into effect.⁸⁸

It was decided that when three of the four synods adopted the constitution the General Synod would be established. The next meeting would then be held in October, 1821, at Fredericktown, Maryland. The proceedings were to be printed in German and English and distributed to the pastors of the synods.⁸⁹

The first constitution did not have a confessional basis. It did not even mention the Lutheran Confessions; if it had it is doubtful if it would have been acceptable to the synods at that period of confessional development. The beginning of a confessional basis came only five years later (1826) in the oath prescribed for the professors in the General Synod's Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania,⁹⁰ and three years later still (1829) in the confessional pledge to be made by candidates for ordination. The latter pledge was placed in the model constitution drawn up by the General Synod for its constituent synods.⁹¹

It Rejects the General Synod

When the New York Ministerium met in 1821, it was learned that its members had been by-passed for the second time in the distribution of the necessary documents. First it was the *Plan-Entwurf*, now it was the General Synod minutes with the proposed constitution of the new body. The second oversight could hardly make the members feel more kindly to the General Synod. But they went through the arduous task of considering the constitution without having copies in their own hands. Eventually they came to the expected decision—to defer consideration until they had all received copies so that they "might bestow that attention on the subject which it merited."

⁸⁷ The complete constitution is in the *Minutes, General Synod*, 1820, 5-13.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1820, 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1820, 14.

⁹⁰ Abdel R. Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 101.

⁹¹ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1829, 39.

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It was further decided that after each pastor and church council had studied their copy "it shall be their duty to transmit their decisions to the president of the Synod" before the next meeting of the Ministerium.⁹²

At the meeting the following year (1822) it was reported that only a few congregations had sent in their decisions and "that a majority of the few had deemed the proposed plan inexpedient for the present."⁹³

Some of the members however were not satisfied with remaining aloof. One of them was George A. Lintner, pastor of Schoharie and Cobleskill. He moved for a reconsideration of the whole matter and the Ministerium requested its president to bring to the next meeting "a circumstantial report covering the decisions which he received from the different church councils."⁹⁴

But nothing was done about it at the meeting in 1823. Meanwhile that same year the Pennsylvania Ministerium itself decided to withdraw from the General Synod because of considerable opposition from the congregations in the rural districts, who had been prejudiced against the General Synod as a super-church.⁹⁵

Lintner kept after the matter however and in 1824 raised the question again, this time pessimistically wondering "whether it was probable that such a plan could be carried into full effect" after the action of the Pennsylvania Ministerium to withdraw. Some were even more pessimistic and felt the General Synod "would be abandoned." But Christian Endress, President of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, who was present at the meeting of the New York Ministerium, spoke eloquently for the General Synod and assured his hearers that "it was far from being abandoned." His words sounded almost glad when he added that another conference of the Pennsylvania Ministerium was organizing into the West Pennsylvania Synod and that "this Synod would be active in the General Synod."⁹⁶ The New York Ministerium, however, took no action.

Two years later (1826) Lintner started the agitation anew. He got the Ministerium to read the General Synod constitution again. He once more proposed a resolution to adopt the constitution and to unite with the General Synod. Considerable discussion ensued over the next two days. But the same result obtained, "that the resolution be indefinitely

⁹² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1821, 9-10.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1822, 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1822, 15.

⁹⁵ Jacobs, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, 360.

⁹⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1824, 31-32.

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postponed." Then in 1829 the agitation was renewed, this time through President Ernest Hazelius' report. Once more it was discussed over two days and once more a decision was postponed.⁹⁷

When brought up again the following year (1830), the final decision was still the same, "that this synod finds it not expedient to unite themselves with that body styled the General Synod."⁹⁸

But the proponents had lost all patience with the continual refusal of the Ministerium to link up with the General Synod. So they, for this and other reasons, separated themselves from the Ministerium that year (1830) and organized the Hartwick Synod, which promptly united with the General Synod.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1826, 16-17, 21; 1829, 9-10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1830, 6.

Chapter 4

The Hartwick Synod

WESTERN CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERIUM

The decade of the 1820's was one of growing discontent on the part of the pastors west of Albany. Hazelius, who knew the western territory so intimately, wrote of a number of reasons. The Ministerium was losing touch with its congregations west of Albany because the annual meetings were held only in the east in the larger congregations. There was a lack of such fervor as was to be found in "protracted meetings," that is, in revivalistic services. There was a lack of missionary zeal and endeavor among the older and stronger congregations. Finally, there was the refusal of the Ministerium to join the General Synod.¹

Growing Discontent in the Ministerium

The lack of contact between the Ministerium and its western congregations was serious but understandable. There was much work attached to entertaining pastors and delegates attending a synodical meeting, for they were all guests in the homes of the people. As the Ministerium grew larger there was a natural tendency to meet in the larger churches. Most of the western congregations were small, which made it difficult for them to be host to a synodical meeting. On the other hand, it was a serious financial problem for the western pastors and delegates to travel to the synodical meetings in the east.

With travel so difficult and communication limited to letter writing, there was great need for closer fellowship among the pastors and delegates. Missing an annual meeting was a serious loss, especially for the pastors in isolated places in the western part of the state.

¹ Ernest L. Hazelius, *History of the American Lutheran Church . . . to the year 1842* (Zanesville, Ohio, 1846), 172-176.

As the Ministerium grew older it became more formal. Its eastern pastors frowned upon the revivalistic movement sweeping over the country. But its western pastors liked revivals. They were ministering in communities where revivals were an important part in the church life of the community. If revivals meant so much to the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, why not also to the Lutherans?

Most of the older pastors in the east took quite the opposite view. Here for example is the way President Quitman felt about revivalistic meetings:

Things change here. Since there is no opportunity of speculating in lands and money, we begin to speculate in religion. New sects spring up daily. We are surrounded with frantic Methodists, Erastians or New Lights, Baptists, Universalists, etc. There is continually preaching (so called) in our neighborhood. The Methodists are at present in camp-meeting two miles beyond the Flats. This, and the sitting of the convention in democratic majesty, give us alternately sufficient reason for pity and laughter.²

Western Conference Is Formed

The outcome of this unsatisfied need for closer fellowship and greater fervor in church life was the formation late in 1826 of the Western Conference of the Ministerium.³ Its aims were clearly stated in the "Article of Union" adopted at the first meeting:

That we should assemble from time to time, in order to draw the bands of Christian and brotherly affection still closer; and to consult together on subjects concerning our churches or vacant congregations in our neighborhood—to endeavor to strengthen each other's hands in the work in which we are engaged, and to encourage one another by friendly counsel and conversation, and our people to a life and conduct becoming the professors of the religion of Jesus Christ, by exhortations, sermons and prayers.⁴

The Conference was formed without the approval of the Ministerium. It may even have been done without its knowledge, judging from the way President Wackerhagen of the Ministerium referred to it two years later:

Our brother Hazelius, in a letter dated May 15 [1828], conveys the information that *their* convention, by what I presume you have to understand the association formed some two years since, chiefly by the western members of our

² Letter of Pres. Quitman to his son John, dated September 15, 1821, in J. F. H. Claiborne, *Life and Letters of John A. Quitman*, I, 66.

³ Hazelius, *op. cit.*, 172.

⁴ *Lutheran Magazine*, June, 1830, p. 45.

THE HARTWICK SYNOD

Ministerium, and since known to the world from public documents by the name of the Western Conference of Lutheran Ministers in the State of New York, . . .⁵

Meetings appear to have been held semiannually, certainly after 1827. The minutes of the third meeting,⁶ held January 1, 1828, in Stone Arabia, indicate clearly what the western men wanted but had not found in the old Ministerium. They wanted the "exercises in the church conducted in a manner calculated to produce serious and devout impressions on the hearts of the hearers . . . to interest the feelings of all who were susceptible of religious impressions."

Two such "devout impressions" were well described in the minutes of that meeting. The first came on the morning of the second day. The session had been opened with prayer at 9 o'clock, and the members had proceeded with business. Then,

The hour of 11 having arrived, the Conference pursuant to the resolution adopted last evening, resolved itself into a *Prayer Meeting*. The meeting was opened by the Rev. Chairman, who read a portion of the second chapter of Acts, and in a short practical address to the people who attended the meeting, pointed out the importance of the duty in which the Conference were about to engage. The brethren then bowed their knees in humble supplication to Almighty God, for the powerful and reviving influence of His Holy Spirit upon the churches which they represented.

They prostrated themselves before the Throne of Divine Mercy, earnestly imploring the blessing of God on our Theological Seminaries at Hartwick and Gettysburg, and more particularly on the students of divinity who attended the meeting. They prayed for the universal extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom and the glorious manifestations of His power and grace among all nations of the earth. The meeting was continued until nearly 1 o'clock P.M. It was a serious and solemn occasion—every heart was deeply affected.

All seemed to realize that the house was filled with the presence of God, and that the Holy Spirit was in their midst.

The second experience occurred at the afternoon session of the same day:

Mr. Schultz, from the congregation of Stone-Arabia, informed the Conference that Mrs. Bortles, a poor widow, had contributed a small amount to the missionary collection, which was yesterday taken up in the church; and he asked the advice of the Conference whether, considering her destitute circumstances, it would not be proper to return to her the amount of her contribution.

Mrs. Bortles, who was present in the church, then rose in her seat and with strong emotions, manifested by her tears, stated to the Conference that what she had contributed was a humble offering, which in her heart she felt herself constrained to give—that she had children in the west, who were famishing for the

⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1828, 17.

⁶ *Lutheran Magazine*, February 1828, pp. 9-14.

bread of life—that she hoped the Conference would retain her contribution and that however small, she prayed that it might be attended with a blessing.

Whereupon it was unanimously *resolved*, that the thanks of the Conference be presented to this *poor widow* for her *mite* in the treasury of the Lord; and that the Rev. Chairman express to her the earnest wishes of the brethren, that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon her.

"The Lutheran Magazine"

The first endeavor of the men of the Western Conference was to keep themselves better informed about the life of the church. To accomplish this they published *The Lutheran Magazine*,⁷ the first periodical in New York synodical history. It appeared in February, 1827, and was continued monthly for four years until the appearance in 1831 of the General Synod's English periodical, *The Lutheran Observer*. Each issue embraced about 24 pages. While gotten out only by a committee of the Western Conference, its real editor was undoubtedly George A. Lintner, pastor at Schoharie.⁸ The contents of the first number quoted below are typical of the material that went into the four years' issues:

Introduction. (An editorial on starting the new magazine.)

Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church.

Domestic Intelligence:

Sketch of the Lutheran Church in Schoharie, New York, and Installation of Pastor John Goertner, Johnstown, New York.

Foreign Intelligence:

Statement of the number of Professors, Institutions, and Church Government of the Lutheran Church in Europe: 1. In the Empire of Austria; 2. In the States of the King of Prussia.

Missionary Seminary at Basle.

Biography:

Francis Volkmar Reinhard.

Miscellaneous Articles:

Account of the Death of a Profligate Man.

Awful End of a Drunkard. From the *New York Observer*.

Anecdote. From *Western Recorder*.

The Fortune Teller and Her Husband Reformed By a Bible.

⁷ *The Lutheran Magazine*. 4 vols., Schoharie 1827-1831. Published monthly. First number Feb., 1827; last number April, 1831. Vols. 1-3 "published by the Western Conference of Lutheran Ministers in the State of New York." Vol. 4 "published by the Board of Directors of the Domestic Missionary and Educational Society of the Lutheran Church in the State of New York." Complete set in Library of Lutheran Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pa.

⁸ Frederick G. Gotwald, *Pioneer American Lutheran Journalism, 1812-1850*, 16; a reprint from *The Lutheran Quarterly*, April, 1912, with additional illustrations.

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Of particular interest, in the light of the Rationalism which had gripped the Ministerium, was the subject of the first article: "Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church." This was developed into a series running through the first volume. The series discussed appreciatively the Augsburg Confession (March, 1827), the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (May and June, 1827), the Smalcald Articles (August, 1827), and the Catechisms of Luther (January, 1828).

Another interesting series was that of "The History of the Lutheran Church" down to 1680, in nine articles running through volumes one and two. Most of the time the articles received front-page recognition.

Concern for Home Mission Work

The second endeavor was to undertake aggressively the much-needed home mission work. The lack of zeal for home missions among the Ministerium congregations in the east was deplorable. Contributions to the Ministerium's missionary fund had totaled a high of \$146 in 1823, but then receded in spite of the growing need as exhibited by the reports of the indefatigable Hazelius. Here is the record:⁹

1823	. . . . .	\$146
1824	. . . . .	50
1825	. . . . .	94
1826	. . . . .	50
1827	. . . . .	92
1828	. . . . .	50
1829	. . . . .	34
1830	. . . . .	49

The drop in 1829 is much worse than it appears, for it came from only two eastern parishes, namely, \$9 from New Germantown, New Jersey (Pastor Pohlman), and \$25 from Albany (Pastor Philip Mayer, who had been Pohlman's pastor). The 1830 total also reflects little credit to the eastern congregations. Of the \$49 received, \$20 came from two congregations in Canada out of gratitude for having at last secured a pastor; and \$10 came from New Germantown, New Jersey. The remaining \$19 came from six other parishes.

Hazelius took note of this in his report to the Ministerium in 1830. It was his last report before leaving for Gettysburg Seminary and revealed the glaring lack of concern:

⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1823, 8, 24; 1824, 28; 1825, 17-18; 1826, 11; 1827, 9; 1828, 8; 1829, 7; 1830, 21-22 (for the year 1829); 1830, 19 (for the year 1830).

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The wants of our brethren are great. I know there are a number of Evangelical Lutheran ministers here who have undertaken missionary tours at their own expense, and I am persuaded that many others would do the same, if they had the means to do it; yet I also know that some who have undertaken such journeys at their own expense have sometimes severely felt the burden.

It is therefore no more than right that we should exert ourselves to aid our destitute brethren, and I therefore entreat you again, beloved brethren, to be liberal in your contributions. There are several congregations within the bounds of our Synod which are able from their means to contribute from one to two hundred dollars for the support of the gospel. To further this work, I recommend to the Synod to request the ministers and lay delegates, to encourage the formation of missionary societies in their respective congregations.¹⁰

But nothing came of his plea other than the perfunctory resolution "that the missionary contributions be continued." The few contributions received that year have already been mentioned.

Missionary-minded men kept insisting upon doing something about the great need. Notable among them was Henry N. Pohlman, pastor of New Germantown, New Jersey, from the eastern congregations, with George Lintner, Professor George B. Miller and Hazelius from the western congregations. In 1827 the missionary committee under the chairmanship of Hazelius recommended to the Ministerium to "form itself into a [synodical] Missionary Society, and urge all pastors and lay delegates to form local societies in their congregations." But nothing was done about it except to pass the routine resolution "that the report be received, that the thanks of the house be offered the committee for their services, and that they be continued for the current year."¹¹

To bring the matter to a head Pohlman offered a supplementary resolution which was adopted:

That a committee be appointed to prepare a form of a constitution for the establishment of missionary societies, to be recommended to the several congregations belonging to this synod for their adoption.

To the committee of three were appointed the leaders in the missionary movement: Hazelius, chairman, Pohlman and Lintner.

Domestic Missionary Society

The western men, however, were determined to wait no longer for the Ministerium to do something. They had a conference meeting scheduled for May 10, 1828, in St. Paul's Church, Minden, Montgomery

¹⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1830, 22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1827, 11.

County.¹² But they shelved all conference business and turned it into "A Convention of Delegates from Different Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the Western Parts of the State of New York."¹³ Pastors and delegates were present from twelve congregations, all from territory west of Albany. Hazelius was unanimously chosen "President of the Convention."

The convention went vigorously to work and soon had a constitution completed and adopted, and so brought into being "The Domestic Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church in the State of New York." There was little likelihood of much criticism from the Ministerium in thus launching the synodical society without its approval, for the outspoken advocates of the Society, Hazelius, George Miller, and Henry Pohlman, were respectively president, secretary, and treasurer of the Ministerium itself.

The object of the Society as defined in the constitution was "to propagate the gospel among the destitute, to organize new churches, and to assist feeble congregations in supporting the gospel ministry." It should be noted that the word "destitute," used frequently in missionary reports of the period, means "destitute of the church's ministrations," because they were widely scattered, often in settlements too small to maintain a pastor.

The nine officers (there were five vice-presidents) and thirty directors constituted the Board of Directors. This was one group where you could honorably buy yourself a directorship, for the constitution provided that "each subscriber of \$5 annually shall become a director, and every person paying the sum of \$30 at one time shall be a director for life."

While the Society met annually, the Board of Directors actually conducted all the business, appointed missionaries and prescribed their fields, and controlled the funds. The Society had power also to "create [an] agent or agents for appointing missionaries," an office comparable to that of a modern home missions superintendent. This is a great deal of power for a "Society" to have, but it was the only way to get the work done.

¹² *Lutheran Magazine*, Feb., 1828, 14.

¹³ "Proceedings of a Convention of Delegates . . . , in *Lutheran Magazine*, June, 1828, p. 101-108." The "Proceedings" are on pp. 101-105; the constitution on pp. 105-107; the first officers and directors on pp. 107-108.

WESTERN CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERIUM

When the organization was completed, of the nine officers, five were pastors and four laymen, and of the thirty directors, eleven were pastors and nineteen were laymen. With the possible exception of two laymen who were not identified as to their congregational connections, only four came from eastern congregations: Pastor Frederick C. Schaeffer, second vice-president, and his delegate, from St. James Church, New York City, and Pastor Pohlman and his delegate from New Germantown, New Jersey.

The final step was the formulation of a simple constitution for the "auxiliary societies" within the congregations. The purpose of the auxiliary society was to "co-operate" with the synodical society by gathering together members who would "solicit contributions."

Thus the parent society might "assist vacant congregations and destitute settlements, where people are not in a condition to support a regular and stated Gospel ministry."¹⁴

The movement got off to a flourishing start. Ten auxiliary societies were organized during the first year. A total of \$528 was received, of which \$328 was for the missionary fund and \$200 for the fund to educate theological students. The first setback came when only \$70 could be expended from the missionary fund because of the "scarcity of missionaries to engage in the services of the Society." The need was great, for of the sixty-seven congregations in the Ministerium nearly one-third were without pastors.¹⁵

In the second year the auxiliary societies had increased to thirteen. But more significant was the fact that more pastors from the eastern congregations were now appearing on the list of directors of the synodical society: Albany, Brunswick, Athens, Ghent and Rhinebeck.¹⁶

Unsuccessful Agitation for General Synod

The third endeavor of the men of the Western Conference was to continue the agitation in the Ministerium to unite with the General Synod.

George Lintner, leader of the agitation, kept continually in touch with the General Synod leaders. In 1825 he with three other pastors from the Ministerium were appointed agents for soliciting contributions for

¹⁴ *Lutheran Magazine*, June 1828, pp. 113-114.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, May, 1829, p. 89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, June, 1830, pp. 37-39.

the General Synod's newly founded theological seminary at Gettysburg.¹⁷

The General Synod leaders at every opportunity spoke appreciatively of the men of the Ministerium who were interested in the General Synod. In the "Pastoral Address" of 1827, for example, commendation was given the "brethren in the western section of the [New York] state," who, "without receding from their synodical relation to their brethren, formed themselves" into the Western Conference.¹⁸

Hazelius was especially recognized in the Pastoral Address. He had written a long letter to the General Synod concerning various items relating to Hartwick Seminary and the new Gettysburg Seminary. Most of the letter was reproduced in the Pastoral Address. At the next meeting of the General Synod in 1829 another letter from Hazelius, written this time in his capacity as president of the New York Ministerium, was read. He had asked merely for the "minutes and other documents of the General Synod," but what he doubtless had in mind was the wish to be at the meeting instead of merely reading about it. The General Synod helped, too, for it appointed its secretary a delegate to the New York Ministerium.¹⁹

Lintner gave vent to his pent-up feelings about the Ministerium's attitude in his first report after he became president of the Hartwick Synod.²⁰ He had "always been of the opinion" that the Ministerium should unite with the General Synod in order to "aid it in its endeavors to promote the general welfare of our church in the United States." He deplored the isolationist policy of the Ministerium in maintaining that it could "transact its own business and attend to the interests of its churches, without the aid and advice of the General Synod." That was the whole trouble, "each pursuing his own cause, without regarding the common interest."

He put his finger upon the sore spot in the attitude of the isolationists. They were worried about the "General Synod exercising any improper authority" over the individual synod. Such worry was entirely unnecessary because the rights of the synods had been carefully protected in the constitution of the General Synod. Other denominations were consolidating into general bodies, Lintner continued, and it was "high time for us to learn . . . that those local jealousies and sectional destinations

¹⁷ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1825, 6-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1827, 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1829, 5, 7.

²⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 22-24.

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which have kept us asunder so long should cease, and that we should be united and strive together like a band of brethren for promoting our common interests."

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When the Ministerium refused year after year to change its attitude on such important questions as uniting with the General Synod, the men of the Western Conference finally took matters into their own hands.

Call for a New Synod

Three days before the Ministerium was to meet in Ghent (near Albany) in 1830, the Western Conference held its meeting on September 7 and 8. Hazelius, president of the Ministerium and chairman of the Conference, conducted the opening service of the Conference and presided at the meeting. "The most important subject" of the meeting, it was reported, "was a proposition to separate from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York." After everyone present "had fully expressed his sentiments," it was unanimously decided

That the ministers and delegates within the bounds of the Conference be requested to meet in convention at Schoharie, on the last Thursday of October, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of forming a new Synod.²¹

When the Ministerium met several days later President Hazelius presided, but neither he nor anyone else apparently reported on the meeting of the Western Conference and the decision to form a new synod.²² It was unfortunate that this was not brought before the Ministerium, so that an orderly separation might have taken place. As it was, the separation without the approval of the parent body gave opportunity for some bitter statements in the Ministerium a year later.

The organizing convention of the Hartwick Synod was held as scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 26 and 27, 1830, at St. Paul's Church, Schoharie.²³ In attendance were ten pastors and twelve lay delegates representing fifteen parishes. General William Mann, a layman from Schoharie, was elected president of the convention.

²¹ *Lutheran Magazine*, Oct., 1830, pp. 134-135.

²² There is no reference to the matter in either the original protocol or the printed minutes for 1830.

²³ "Proceedings of a Convention . . . held in Schoharie, October, 1830," in *Lutheran Magazine*, November, 1830, pp. 145-147.

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At a time when emotionalism might easily have gained sway it was fortunate that the convention started with the negative motion of Professor George B. Miller, who had just succeeded Hazelius as principal of Hartwick Seminary and who was opposed to separating from the Ministerium:

That in the view of this convention, it is inexpedient to form a new synod, under existing circumstances.

After much discussion the matter was laid over to the next day. Further discussion continued most of the day. Then the resolution was put to a vote and was defeated by a vote of eighteen to four. Thereupon it was unanimously resolved

That it is expedient to establish, without delay, a new Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this state.

The unanimous decision apparently meant that Professor Miller abstained from voting, for he did not join the new synod but retained his membership in the Ministerium.

That evening the constitution recommended by the General Synod for the local synods was with "some local alterations and amendments" unanimously adopted.

Upon the adoption of the constitution of the Hartwick Synod the first officers were elected: George A. Lintner, pastor at Schoharie, president; Adam Crownse, pastor at Guilderland, secretary; and Philip Wieting, pastor at Sharon, treasurer.

Then only was the parent body thought of, in a resolution requesting the new secretary to write to the president of the Ministerium "to inform him of the organization of this Synod, and of its friendly disposition towards the ecclesiastical body from which it has separated."

With that the convention adjourned, to meet as a synod in September, 1831.

George Lintner, First President

The first president of the Hartwick Synod, George Ames Lintner (1796-1872), was an able leader. Born in Minden, Montgomery County, New York, he was educated at Union College, Schenectady, and studied theology under his pastor, Peter William Domeier. He was ordained by the New York Ministerium in 1818 and served the parish of Schoharie

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and Cobleskill for thirty years until 1849.²⁴ It was during his ministry at Schoharie that Walter Gunn went into foreign mission work in 1843, the first foreign missionary from New York.

Censured by the Ministerium

Before either the Hartwick Synod or the New York Ministerium met again within another year, an unfortunate incident took place which stirred up tempers in both synods. It concerned the installation by the New York Ministerium of Pastor Charles A. Smith in the Stone Arabia congregation in July, 1831.

The Stone Arabia congregation had no pastor at the time of the convention at which the Hartwick Synod was formed, but it had been represented by a lay delegate and to all intents and purposes had become a part of the new synod. Early the following year, 1831, it called Charles A. Smith to serve it as well as the congregation at Palatine. But the Palatine congregation belonged to the Ministerium.

Smith had been ordained by the New York Ministerium in 1830 and became the pastor of the Palatine congregation. He was opposed to the Hartwick Synod and requested Professor George B. Miller, acting president of the New York Ministerium, to install him in his two congregations. Assistant Professor Christian B. Thuemmel of Hartwick Seminary, a member of the Ministerium, was also asked to officiate at the service. The installation took place in July.²⁵

Just why Professor Miller, as acting president of the Ministerium and present at the meeting when the Hartwick Synod was organized, did not consult President Lintner is not stated. When Lintner heard of it he wrote both Miller and Thuemmel for an explanation. The letters were resented and laid before the Ministerium at its meeting in September, 1831, with Miller's assertion that he had done no wrong.²⁶

It was an unfortunate move to bring this controversial matter before the whole Ministerium. The Hartwick Synod separation, entered into without the knowledge and approval of the Ministerium, was in itself

²⁴ Edmund Belfour, *Historical Sketch of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Schoharie, New York* (Pittsburgh, 1896), 31-34; and by the same author, "George Ames Lintner," in *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*, 277.

²⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1831, 17; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1832, 22-23.

²⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1831, 17, 18-22.

bound to stir up ill feeling. Now, with the Lintner letters made public, the ill feeling flared up into open hostility and bitterness. The outcome was the adoption of a series of resolutions which, while conveying a grudging blessing, nevertheless condemned the Hartwick Synod separation and Lintner in particular:

We cannot consider this separation as either necessary or useful; and we entirely disapprove of the manner in which it appears to have been effected.

Notwithstanding our views of the inexpediency of the separation which seems to have taken place, and of the impropriety of the mode employed in respect to it, we heartily wish our brethren of the Hartwick Lutheran Synod the best blessing of the God of peace and love in advancing the interest of the Christian truth, order and virtue.

The letters of the Rev. G. A. Lintner to the Rev. G. B. Miller and the Rev. C. B. Thuemmel, . . . are highly improper, grossly insulting towards the Rev. Gentlemen to whom they were addressed, uncalled for, unauthorized and deserving the censure of this body.²⁷

But regardless of what the New York Ministerium thought of the separation, the General Synod leaders were quite happy about it. "The establishment of the Hartwick Synod met with universal approbation," wrote John George Schmucker, one of the General Synod's ablest leaders. "We know the principles for which you have been contending, and the truly evangelical designs you are aiming at in this important step . . . We hail the day when we shall embrace your delegates in our midst."²⁸

First Synodical Meeting

The first convention of the Hartwick Synod was held in the fall of 1831, at Johnstown, three weeks after the Ministerium met, but the members appeared to be blissfully unaware of the censure which the parent body had passed. The Hartwick Synod had proceeded upon the assumption that the relations with the Ministerium would be amicable and had sent Pastor John D. Lawyer as its official delegate. Lawyer could not have been present for the whole session of the Ministerium, for when he attended the Hartwick convention three weeks later he reported nothing about what had happened. Perhaps he left the Ministerium meeting early because he felt unwanted. He had been referred to in the

²⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1831, 12.

²⁸ Letter of J. G. Schmucker to George A. Lintner, dated York, Pa., Feb. 26, 1831, in archives of United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of the Hartwick Synod.

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Ministerium merely as one who "intimated that he belonged to *another Synod*" at the time when the Pennsylvania delegate was referred to as the "delegate from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania."²⁹

Lintner made no mention of the Smith case and the synodical meeting proceeded smoothly and unruffled.

The members met, as was customary in the parent body, on Saturday. They made up a small group: six pastors, six lay delegates, and two commissioners, representatives from congregations without pastors.

The Sunday activities started at 6 o'clock in the morning with a service of "prayer, singing and mutual edification." The principal service was at 10 o'clock, at which President Lintner administered the Lord's Supper.³⁰ This was not a synodical communion but one for the local congregation as well as for the pastors and lay delegates. The communion was similarly administered for many years.³¹

Afterward Lintner preached in the Presbyterian church and another pastor preached in both the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches. At seven in the evening a prayer meeting was held in the Lutheran church and "religious exercises and preaching were also performed in different parts of the congregation."

Four "ministerial sessions" were held to pass upon pastors applying for admission and to examine candidates for licensure and ordination. The ordination service was held on Wednesday morning in the presence of the congregation.

As in the parent synod, all decisions of the ministerial sessions were final and not reported to the Synod as a whole. As a matter of fact two of the ministerial sessions at the 1831 convention were held after the Synod had adjourned:

The business of the Synod having been transacted in the spirit of Christian love and brotherly affection, and the hour of two o'clock having arrived for the meeting of the ministerium,³² the session closed by singing a hymn and a fervent prayer to the throne of grace by the Rev. President; after which the lay-delegates were dismissed, with the wish that the blessing of the Lord might accompany them.³³

²⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1831, 17, 18-22.

³⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 4.

³¹ See below, p. 134.

³² The "meeting of the ministerium" is the same as the "ministerial session." See above, p. 50.

³³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 11.

Unites with the General Synod

Lintner made a strong plea in behalf of the General Synod and urged that the decision to unite with it be unanimous.³⁴ There was no problem about that, particularly after hearing letters from Professor Samuel S. Schmucker of Gettysburg Seminary and President Benjamin Kurtz of the General Synod, extending warm greetings and "intimating that the general welfare of our Church might be promoted by a union with" the General Synod. The decision was unanimous.³⁵

A month later in October, 1831, President Lintner and a lay delegate were welcomed at the General Synod's sixth convention in Frederick, Maryland. "Welcomed" is an understatement. The General Synod had Lintner preach at the Sunday evening service and the next morning elected him secretary.³⁶

That the Hartwick Synod was going along with the conservatives in the Lutheran Church was evident from its first petition to the General Synod in 1831 that the general body consider "the propriety of publishing a correct translation of the Augsburg Confession."³⁷ The following year a second request was made of the General Synod, this time to consider publishing a "complete and correct life of Dr. Martin Luther."³⁸

The Hartwick Synod members were proud of their association with the General Synod. A year after they united with that body Lintner summed up the praise: the "form of discipline" was exercising a "most salutary influence on the minds" of the people; the new hymnal was being widely distributed; the new liturgy soon to be published would have the same reception.³⁹

They went further. In the same year (1832) they decided that their Synod should form itself into a Sunday School Union, auxiliary to the Sunday School Union of the General Synod.⁴⁰ Three years later, when the General Synod asked the constituent synods whether it should undertake foreign mission work, the Hartwick Synod members responded unanimously in "pledging themselves to use their utmost exertions for the furthering of such an important enterprise."⁴¹

³⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1831, 9-10.

³⁶ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1831, 3-4.

³⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1832, 10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1832, 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1832, 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, *Hartwick Synod*, 1835, 14-15.

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Accepts the Augsburg Confession

The constitution for synods, prepared by Samuel S. Schmucker, had been adopted by the General Synod at its 1829 convention.⁴² In it is to be found a definite doctrinal statement which every candidate for licensure and ordination was to accept publicly. It must be remembered that this was only the beginning of confessional Lutheranism in America, which explains why the Augsburg Confession was acknowledged to be only "substantially correct":

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?⁴³

The acceptance of this confessional position was definitely a step in advance of the New York Ministerium, and was commented on editorially in the *Lutheran Magazine*:

The new Synod is based on the orthodox principles which are professed and inculcated by the great body of Lutherans in the United States.⁴⁴

But not everyone in the Hartwick Synod was satisfied with these "orthodox principles." Just when opposition to the Augsburg Confession became vocal is not stated in the records, but by 1837 it was quite strong. The Hartwick Synod that year ordered the Augsburg Confession to "be republished with explanatory notes."⁴⁵ In the preface to the work, written doubtless by George Lintner, it was stated that an "assault" had been made upon the Augsburg Confession by members of the Synod. In particular, some statements had been "extensively circulated throughout the bounds of the Hartwick Synod" that it had been teaching the "unessential parts" of the Confession, namely, that "children are condemned for original sin, that baptism is a saving ordinance, that ministers are authorized to forgive sins, etc."⁴⁶ While no names were mentioned, it seems

⁴² *Minutes, General Synod*, 1829, 8, 39. It was appended to the constitution of the General Synod as chapters 8-20. Since "this constitution for synods and that of the General Synod are parts of one entire system of Lutheran Church government, the chapters are numbered as a continuation" of the constitution of the General Synod. *Ibid.*, 29, note.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1829, 38-39.

⁴⁴ *Lutheran Magazine*, Nov., 1830, 164.

⁴⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 20.

⁴⁶ *The Augsburg Confession with Explanatory Notes and Observations, by a Committee of the Hartwick Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York* (Troy, N. Y., 1837, 30 pp). "Preface" by the committee of which George A. Lintner was chairman, 3-4.

reasonable to assume that the persons accused of spreading the statements were the men who later that year left the synod and organized the Franckean Synod.

But even though the Hartwick Synod went only so far as to accept the "essential points of doctrine" in the Augsburg Confession, a concluding paragraph in the preface to the 1837 edition acknowledged its value to the Lutheran Church:

The doctrines of the Augsburg Confession are the doctrines of the Reformation; and the committee believe that our prosperity and usefulness as a Church depend, under God, upon the preservation of those doctrines. In this day of bold and reckless encroachment on the landmarks of gospel truth, we cannot too faithfully adhere to those scriptural standards which the Reformers instituted for the defence and preservation of the true faith. If we give up these standards, we relinquish one of the safeguards of the purity of the Church,—we open a door for all manner of abuse in the faith and order of God's house,—we give up the principle of a uniform and uncompromising devotedness to what we conceive to be the truth.⁴⁷

A DEEPER SPIRITUAL LIFE

Perhaps even more compelling than the reasons already given whereby the western pastors separated themselves from the Ministerium was their yearning for a deeper spiritual life. To them the Ministerium had become old and sedate and formal. The western men wanted more fervor in the church services. They wanted to see something done about the great need for moral reform. They compared the way of the staid old Ministerium with the way of the new revivalism sweeping the country and they definitely did not want the way of the Ministerium. They wanted the kind of religious experiences that are detailed above in connection with one of the Western Conference meetings.⁴⁸ They wanted that regularly and when they divided their new Synod into two conferences they made it clear that "the chief business to be performed at them [the conferences] is to awaken and convert sinners and to edify believers, by close and practical preaching of the Gospel."⁴⁹

Revivalism in New York

Revivalism swept over central and western New York, where the Hartwick Synod men were ministering, with greater intensity than else-

⁴⁷ *The Augsburg Confession with Explanatory Notes*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Above, p. 72.

⁴⁹ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1831, 8-9.

where in the country and the area became known as the "burnt-over district." The region had been settled by New Englanders, some of whom went all out for excesses of every kind. This was the region of the anti-Masonic agitation, part of the Millerite craze, the Fox sisters and beginnings of spiritualism, and Mormonism.⁵⁰

The Lutherans beyond Albany were only a small minority of the population. Some of the Lutheran pastors were born in the region; most of the younger men were trained there in Hartwick Seminary. They grew up with revivalism all around them. Nevertheless, with the exception of a few who later organized the Franckean Synod, the Lutheran pastors did not give way to excesses. They gave their attention also to the more orderly matters of church life, as evidenced for example by the discussion held in the closing session of their synod's first convention. That session was devoted wholly to "brotherly conversation on pastoral duties and experience." The topics discussed were:

Baptism.

Confirmation.

Evidences of religion.

Prayer meetings and the manner of conducting them.

Means most proper to be used to promote revivals.⁵¹

This concern for a deeper spiritual growth led to a resolution of the Synod in 1838 that pastors were expected to present with their parochial reports "a full statement of the state of religion in their respective congregations."⁵²

Revivals in the Hartwick Synod

Revivals, usually called "protracted meetings" or "conference meetings,"⁵³ became a regular part of the life of the congregations of the Hartwick Synod. The pastors reported regularly to the Synod of the blessings resulting from them.

The blessings so reported were many. That was particularly true in the first year of the life of the new synod. President Lintner reported that "so powerful and extensive has been the work of the Holy Spirit that upwards of 1,000 souls have been hopefully converted and admitted into the Church."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America* (N. Y., 1930), 396-97.

⁵¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 14.

⁵² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1840, 22.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1832, 21.

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The revivals, Lintner continued, took two forms in various congregations. One was a mighty, sudden awakening; the other the quiet, gentle influence. But his own words are much more picturesque:

In this work of grace so extensive through the church, we have seen the influence of the Holy Spirit exhibited under a great variety of circumstances.

In places where vice and iniquity had predominated for years, the attention of the people was suddenly arrested, and crowds of convicted sinners appeared in the house of God, bathed in tears—bowed to the dust, and crying for mercy; the most stubborn unbelievers and hardened transgressors were melted and subdued by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God.

In other instances, this influence gradually descended, calm and refreshing like the gentle dew coming down from heaven, to fertilize the earth.

The revival went far beyond the local congregation. Inspired by the Lord's blessing, pastors and laymen enthusiastically banded together to conduct rounds of revivals. Here is the description of one conducted in the spring of 1841 at Dansville:

On Tuesday Brother Selmser arrived and we commenced in Dansville.

The attendance was good, the church was from the first filled, sometimes to overflowing. But it took some time before any movement was made. On Friday I think I gave the first call and a few came forward. The number afterwards constantly increased. Brother Selmser remained a little over a fortnight and there had about 125 come forward of all ages and conditions.

There were however scarcely any children, they being nearly all middle-aged persons and some considerably advanced in life. Some men of considerable standing in society. Quite a number of drunkards came forward and we have reason to believe were converted.

I have never seen young converts come out more decided and entirely consecrated to God, than they have in the revivals in which it has been my privilege to labour this fall and winter.⁵⁵

The revival or protracted meeting which continued for a period of three days appeared to be the most acceptable. A Synod resolution actually "recommended a continuance" of them as "hitherto observed throughout the bounds of the Synod."⁵⁶ There were occasions, too, when special thanksgiving was expressed by the Synod for the blessings from the revivals. In 1839 for example a resolution was passed "to place on record a special acknowledgment of their gratitude to Almighty God for pouring out his Holy Spirit and granting revivals to most of the churches under their care."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Letter of Pastor Levi Sternberg to President George A. Lintner of Hartwick Synod, dated Dansville, N. Y., March 22, 1841, in archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of Hartwick Synod.

⁵⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1834*, 18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1839, 19.

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The Synod had good precedent for making such acknowledgment, for the General Synod itself did the same. In 1843 the General Synod adopted the following statement under the heading of "Revivals":

The Church during the last year throughout her length and breadth has been signally blessed with most precious seasons of revival. From the most remote South to the North, our hearts have been cheered with the delightful information that that pastors and people have been refreshed with the gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸

MORAL REFORM

Temperance

The stress upon a deeper spiritual life led inevitably to the condemnation of certain evils that beset the Christian. Chief among the evils was the widespread prevalence of drunkenness. There was a steady increase in the importation and manufacture of distilled spirits, and these were commonly substituted for the mild fermented liquors which had previously been the ordinary drink of the people. Widespread excess was the result.

The attempts to curb this social evil were feeble until the organization in 1826 of the "American Society for the Promotion of Temperance." At first the aim was temperance, with particular attention to curbing the use of hard liquor. But within ten years there developed a strong movement for total abstinence which banned fermented as well as distilled liquors. Then in 1840 came the extraordinary agitation known as the "Washingtonian movement" which sought the reformation of the individual drunkard.⁵⁹

Most of the churches went in strongly for the temperance movement. The Hartwick Synod was in its heart and soul right from the start:

This Synod cordially approves of the measures that are used for the purpose of putting down that vice, and we earnestly recommend temperance societies to our people.⁶⁰

The agitation was effective, for within five years there were seventeen societies in the thirty-eight congregations of the Synod.⁶¹

The Synod co-operated readily with the American Temperance Union in 1836 in the call for total abstinence. As "Total Abstinence" became

⁵⁸ *Minutes, General Synod, 1843, 20. Reprinted in Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1843, 22, and in Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1843, 23.*

⁵⁹ Leonard W. Bacon, *A History of American Christianity* (N. Y., 1900), 285-291.

⁶⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1831, 9.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1836, 7.

the slogan, so the Synod and the societies within its congregations talked the same way. Within two years President Jacob Senderling reported that already "the new pledge is well supported in some of our churches."⁶²

In 1839 the Synod in three clearly worded resolutions made total abstinence a matter of conscience for its people:

According to the pure and holy principles of the Gospel and spirit of religion, it is the bounden duty of members of the church to abstain from trafficking in intoxicating liquors, or using them as a beverage.

In our deliberate opinion, it is the duty of the ministers, officers and members of the churches connected with this body, to use their best endeavors, in the exercise of Christian affection and forbearance, to induce all our members to abandon entirely the use and traffic in intoxicating liquors.

The foregoing resolutions [are to] be read by all our ministers from their pulpits, and they [are] requested to urge them upon their congregations for the reasons and in the manner above stated.⁶³

By 1841, the eleventh year of the Synod, a "synodical temperance meeting" is mentioned for the first time as part of the Synod program.⁶⁴

Temperance and the Lord's Supper

The acceptance of total abstinence inevitably raised the question of the use of wine in the Lord's Supper. Other denominations had no difficulty in substituting grape juice for wine. But this was going too far for the Hartwick Synod. The question apparently was not raised until 1845, in the fifteenth year of the Synod, when the following resolution was introduced:

That in view of the onward march of temperance principles, it be recommended to the churches in our connection to procure for sacramental use "the fruit of the vine," free from alcoholic properties.⁶⁵

The resolution provoked much discussion; then it was "ordered laid over to the next annual meeting of Synod."

It came up the following year but the Synod adopted no directive to its congregations. It left the matter entirely in the hands of each congregation:

It [is] recommended to our churches to procure, if possible, for sacramental use, wine free from alcoholic properties.⁶⁶

⁶² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 33-36; 1838, 28.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1839, 21.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1841, 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1845, 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1846, 14.

Sabbath Observance

Attending church services was intimately connected with a deeper spiritual life. Yet despite all the efforts of the pastors church attendance fell far short of what was considered ideal. But the problem was much more than nonattendance of church members at services. It had to do with the breakdown of the rigorous Puritan Sabbath which many had come to call the "American Sabbath."⁶⁷ There was a growing tendency to use Sunday, or the Sabbath as it was usually termed, for recreation and even self-indulgence.

The Hartwick Synod tried to stem the tide as did other denominations, but to little avail. About all the Synod could do was to exhort its people in resolutions like the following, adopted in 1836:

That in view of the prevailing desecration of the Sabbath, we deem it the imperative duty of every Christian, both by precept and example, to keep the Sabbath day holy.⁶⁸

Several years later the matter came up again. This time the "rulers" were particularly blamed for their bad example, and "all Christians and patriots" were called upon to preserve the Sabbath. Here is the stirring resolution:

We consider the Sabbath a divine institution, designed to promote the interests of religion, and preserve our social, civil and political institutions: we view with pain and mortification the frequent violations of this day, especially by our rulers, who encourage the evil by their example: we deem it the duty of all the friends of religion and good order to unite their efforts and prayers for the suppression of this sin, and it [is] cordially recommended to the ministers and churches connected with this body, and to all Christians and patriots, to endeavor by all proper means in their power, to preserve the holy Sabbath from desecration.⁶⁹

But of course nothing was changed. At any rate the matter was considered serious enough in 1842 to devote an evening to a "Meeting on the Sanctification of the Sabbath." After an "interesting address," two resolutions were unanimously adopted:

The Sabbath is a divine institution, and a strict observance of it is required by our physical and moral constitution, as well as by the law of God.

In view of the desecration of the Sabbath by professors of religion, it [is] recommended to the ministers in our connexion to present to our people more frequently the sin of Sabbath breaking.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Bacon, *op. cit.* 371.

⁶⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 21.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1839, 20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1842, 19.

All this was in line with the movement throughout the country. The General Synod also took notice of the problem, and adopted a resolution similar to the above:

That God's holy day is desecrated by many church members cannot be doubted, and that their conduct is a stumbling-block in the way of sinners is equally clear. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is continually before us as given amidst the flames and thunderings of Sinai. As a church we have been perhaps remiss in enforcing its obligations upon the people. We earnestly recommend this subject to the action of the ministers and members of the church, so that in the proper observance of this holy day we may secure the blessings of the great Head of the Church.⁷¹

Abolition of Slavery

The slavery question was not a new one in the churches. The anti-slavery movement had started back in the colonial era. But in the 1830's a more aggressive movement got under way, particularly with the organization in 1833 of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Many church people supported the movement and it was not long before the slave question became a church issue of considerable importance. Anti-slavery societies were organized in churches and strong anti-slavery resolutions were adopted by denominational bodies.⁷²

In the Hartwick Synod the question apparently did not come up until 1836, when Pastor Lambert Swackhamer offered a resolution "designed to express the abhorrence of this body relative to the system of slavery in the United States."

It was immediately challenged with this substitute:

This synod deems it inexpedient to interfere with the subject of the abolition of slavery, as an ecclesiastical body.

The discussion continued over two sessions, but when the vote was taken on the substitute it was lost. Then a stronger resolution on non-interference was adopted:

That the subject of the abolition of slavery be indefinitely postponed.⁷³

The matter however was not settled for all the members. The following year four of them withdrew to organize the Franckean Synod, with the abolition of slavery high on its list of moral reforms to contend for.

Only once more was the question raised in the Hartwick Synod. In

⁷¹ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1843, 22. Reprinted in *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1843, 24, and in *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 25.

⁷² Sweet, *op. cit.*, 416-26.

⁷³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 21-22.

1845 Pastor George Lewis introduced a curious resolution "condemnatory to the anti-slavery principles." Probably what he was opposed to was the means used by the abolition societies. But nothing came of the resolution; it was simply tabled.⁷⁴

War and Peace

The subject of war and peace came up only once in the Hartwick Synod in this period, in 1846, when the United States made war on Mexico over the boundaries of Texas. A resolution was adopted condemning war in general and the war with Mexico in particular:

War is opposed to the spirit and precepts of the Gospel; it is always to be regarded as a great national calamity, demoralizing in its influence on the people and destructive to the souls of men; we feel deeply concerned for the honor and interests of our country as a Christian nation in the war in which we are unhappily involved with a neighboring Republic, and we believe it is the solemn duty of Christians in this country to pray and exert their influence that it may be brought to a speedy termination.

It [is] recommended to the brethren to present the subject of war in one or more of its aspects from the pulpit.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1845, 11-12.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1846, 17.

Chapter 5

The Franckean Synod

DISCONTENT WITHIN THE HARTWICK SYNOD

Despite the fact that the Hartwick Synod had traveled far on the road to revivalism and moral reform, there were some within its ranks who felt that it had by no means gone far enough.

The discontent centered upon the alleged lack of zeal in caring more adequately for small congregations which were not able to support pastors, together with a lack of emphasis upon personal religious conviction on the part of both ministers and church members.¹

Small Congregations Lack Pastors

The complaining group contended that more attention should be given to the "cries of our many needy and destitute churches" as well as of districts "where churches may be established." The answer that there were not sufficient pastors and that the small congregations could not support them anyway was not good enough, for that showed a lack of zeal in working out a solution to the problem. There was a solution at hand, the complaining group maintained. Why not license "pious, intelligent men, sound in the faith," even though they might not "be classically educated, or have pursued a regular theological course?"

The complainants made it clear that they "by no means objected to an educated ministry." But because the number of men preparing at the theological seminary was wholly inadequate for the needs, they pointedly

¹ Report of John D. Lawyer, first president of the Franckean Synod, in *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 25-28. This report is supplemented by President Lawyer's previous report, in *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 21-24. The same ideas were in the written invitation of Philip Wieting, chairman of the Western Conference of the Hartwick Synod, to Pastor Martin J. Stover, to join the Franckean Synod at its organization; dated Sharon, N. Y., April 28, 1837; in archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of Hartwick Synod.

argued that the "question is not whether it is best for ministers to be liberally educated" but "whether it be best for our churches to be vacant for several years in succession, and a large portion of the people to be absolutely destitute, than to be supplied with ministers of a moderate education and of genuine piety." It should be remembered that the complaining party advocated only licensure, not ordination, for such imperfectly educated ministers.

Associated with this was the complaint that men should be licensed promptly and not have to wait for the annual synodical meeting. Again it was the matter of destitute congregations having to wait for months before candidates could be examined and licensed. The complainants pointed out that the New York Ministerium and other synods permitted the president and secretary of the synod to license candidates during the recess of the synod, but the Hartwick Synod did not.

More Personal Religious Conviction Needed

For another thing the complainants felt that not enough emphasis was being placed upon the necessity for personal religious conviction. This applied to ministers and church members alike.

So far as the ministers were concerned, the complainants wanted "a holy as well as an educated ministry." They insisted that none should be licensed or ordained "who are unacquainted with experimental religion." They based this demand upon what they claimed was a condition too prevalent among the seminary graduates of the time, "too many of whom are a detriment to the cause of religion by their foppish conduct and devotion and conformity to the fashions of the world." The complainants argued this item pointedly also. "An imperfect education," they contended, "may in some measure be supplied by common sense and experimental religion; but an acquaintance with all the learned languages will not answer the want of a converted heart and vital piety."

They were just as insistent upon this need for religious conviction on the part of church members. Only converted persons, they contended, should be received as church members. So concerned were they about this that they put it into the constitution of the new synod which they organized.²

All that has been said ties in with what was at first not so vociferously proclaimed, but which was quite fundamental. This was the keen feeling

² Below, p. 107.

on the part of the complainants that they wanted a plain, simple, old-fashioned biblical Christianity, wholly unencumbered by creeds or confessions.³

The Four Leaders of the Discontent

The leaders of the discontent were four pastors: John D. Lawyer, at Sandlake, Rensselaer County; William Ottman, at Canajoharie, Montgomery County; Lambert Swackhamer, at Manheim, Herkimer County; and Philip Wieting, at Sharon, Schoharie County.

Lawyer, Swackhamer, and Wieting had all been licensed and ordained by the New York Ministerium. Lawyer and Wieting had joined the Hartwick Synod at its organization in 1830, and Swackhamer three years later. Ottman was the youngest in years of service, having been licensed and ordained by the Hartwick Synod.

Lawyer apparently had something about him whereby "in three different synods" (the New York Ministerium, the Hartwick Synod, and the Franckean Synod) "he held, and to some extent sought to propagate, his heresies without disturbance,"⁴ and yet he was prominent enough to be elected president of the Hartwick Synod as well as of the Franckean Synod at its organization.

Little is known of Ottman and Swackhamer.

The real leader of the four was Philip Wieting (1800-1869). He was a native of western New York, living in the town of Minden, Montgomery County. He was educated at Hartwick Seminary where he spent seven years, a period which his biographer said was "a waste of precious time," for "if four of those years had been spent in earnest evangelistic work, he probably would have been much better fitted for the duties of the profession than by being shut up to books and the recitation room."⁵ During his stay at Hartwick Seminary, Wieting was "converted" under the preaching of the great evangelist Charles G. Finney.⁶

Entering upon the ministry in 1826, he shortly afterward became pastor of several Lutheran congregations in the Sharon parish, Schoharie County. There he served for forty years until just before his death.⁷ At

³ In the report cited in note 1 above.

⁴ *A Reunion of the Ministers and Churches [of the Franckean Synod] held . . . 1881* (Phila., 1881), 15. He eventually had his name stricken from the Synod's roll for his heresy; see below, p. 158.

⁵ Henry L. Dox, *Memoir of Rev. Philip Wieting* (Phila., 1870), 34-35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 56-58.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

FRANCKEAN SYNOD IS FORMED

the organization of the Franckean Synod Wieting became its secretary. Later he held the presidency for nine annual terms at various times. Always an ardent supporter of revivals, he reported at the close of his forty years of ministry that in his parish "by the blessing of God we have enjoyed twenty-five distinct revivals of religion."⁸

Call for a New Synod

The discontent in the Hartwick Synod reached its climax early in 1837, when a resolution was adopted in the Western Conference of the Synod calling a meeting of pastors and delegates "for the purpose of organizing another synod in the Lutheran Church."⁹ Philip Wieting, as chairman of the Western Conference, addressed a circular letter "to ministers and churches in this state" inviting them to the convention and presenting "some of the reasons" for a new synod.¹⁰

FRANCKEAN SYNOD IS FORMED

The meeting to bring into being the new synod was held in Fordsbush, Montgomery County, on May 24 and 25, 1837. This was followed immediately, on May 25, by the first "synodical" meeting.

Present were the four pastors who had been the leaders of the discontent, Philip Wieting, John D. Lawyer, William Ottman, and Lambert Swackhamer, together with twenty-seven lay delegates representing eleven congregations. Present also were seven "brethren," probably all lay preachers or theological students, some of whom were to be licensed by the new synod; all seven had the status of "advisory members."

No time was wasted getting into action. Speeches on the necessity for a new synod consumed only two hours. Then upon motion made and seconded by two of the lay delegates it was resolved "as the sense of this convention, that it is a solemn and imperative duty now to form another synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church."¹¹ The official name adopted was "Franckean Synod of the Evangelic [*sic*] Lutheran Church."¹² The curious "Evangelic" was used consistently in the minutes down to 1873.¹³

⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 4. See note 1 above for a copy of the invitation.

¹¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 5; Oct., 1837, 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1873 and 1874, particularly the title pages.

A committee under Philip Wieting was appointed to draft a constitution, for which a recess of thirty minutes was declared. The committee reported promptly at the close of the recess with a complete constitution, prepared of course in advance of the meeting. The remainder of the afternoon and the following morning were devoted to the discussion and adoption of the document.¹⁴

The constitution followed the usual lines concerning the powers of a synod and of the duties and responsibilities of its officers, churches, delegates, ministers and licentiates. It was unique in several respects however. It exacted of ministers a pledge of total abstinence as well as of all-out opposition to slavery, and it disqualified any lay delegate who was a slaveholder or who trafficked in liquor.¹⁵ Furthermore, it contained a "Declaration of Faith."¹⁶

Upon the adoption of the constitution there was offered "devout thanks to Almighty God for the union and harmony which has characterized its proceedings."¹⁷ Thereupon the meeting was adjourned in order to meet as the new Synod.

First Synodical Meeting

The "first session" of the newly formed synod was convened immediately after the adjournment of the organizing convention. The agenda followed closely upon the items about which the leaders had been so dissatisfied while in the Hartwick Synod.¹⁸

The first item was the licensing of three candidates and everybody was perfectly happy in that the examinations could be conducted in just the way they deemed proper and needful.¹⁹

It should be noticed that while the pastors conducted the examination it was done before the whole synod, and not just before the "ministerium session" of the synod. It is interesting to note also that one of the candidates was Nicholas Van Alstine, who was to become an outstanding leader of the Synod.

Home missions was at the head of the list of things to be done. A board of missions was elected to help "feeble and destitute congrega-

¹⁴ The constitution is given in full in *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 5-12.

¹⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 8-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Article 12. *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 11-12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 14-20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 15-16.

tions" and "to extend the influence of the Gospel through our land and other countries." Contributions were asked for and \$206 was received. It was decided to engage upon the monthly "concert of prayer," which had been started by the General Synod in behalf of foreign and domestic missions.

A "ministers' and widows' fund" was decided upon also, but that was destined to go through a long period of inactivity because there had first to be made up "by-laws, rules, and regulations."

Then came temperance and anti-slavery, both of which are discussed below.²⁰

The most ambitious project, but one which never materialized, came last, when "the subject of establishing and erecting a seminary by this Synod and the necessity of such an institution was fully discussed."²¹

The matter of uniting with the General Synod was taken up, but after some discussion it was postponed to the following year, when it was decided in the affirmative.²²

The Franckean Synod grew slowly but steadily. Within four years it embraced fourteen pastors and nine licentiates, with thirty-five congregations reporting. By 1845 the number had increased to twenty pastors, five licentiates and two "preachers," with thirty-five congregations reporting and "several churches not included in the table because no report had been received from them."²³

Less than two years after its formation, the Synod had an official organ in the *Lutheran Herald*.²⁴ The first issue was dated January 1, 1839. It was published semi-monthly and continued until 1845.²⁵

Resented by Ministerium and Hartwick Synod

Going so far from the accepted Lutheran practices of the time, it is not to be wondered at that the new synod was regarded resentfully.

The New York Ministerium simply dismissed the whole matter with a curt resolution:

²⁰ Below, p. 115.

²¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 19.

²² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 11; 1838, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1841, 3-4, 9, 32; 1845, 3-4, 13, 32.

²⁴ *Lutheran Herald and Journal of the Franckean Synod*, hereinafter cited as *Lutheran Herald*. While his name is not directly stated, it would appear that the editor was John D. Lawyer, president of the Synod. Frederick G. Gotwald, *Pioneer American Lutheran Journalism*, 1812-1850, p. 45; reprint from *The Lutheran Quarterly*, April, 1912.

²⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1846, 25.

THE FRANCKEAN SYNOD

We entirely disapprove of the test of Christian fellowship adopted by the Franckean Synod, and of their disorganizing proceedings.²⁶

The Franckean Synod leaders received a copy of the minutes of the Ministerium containing this resolution and obviously they were not pleased. In answer they could not restrain some sly digs at this "respectable body" in an editorial in the *Lutheran Herald*:

We felt it our duty to notice the "minutes" of this respectable body of Lutheran ministers, inasmuch as they had voluntarily condescended to notice the Franckean Synod, and it might be considered unchristian if we did not return the compliment.

The "minutes" contain several reports, but we looked in vain for anything on Temperance, Sabbath Schools, Revivals, Experimental Piety, Moral Reform, Sanctification of the Sabbath, etc. We can safely say there is nothing "disorganizing" in their proceedings.²⁷

The Hartwick Synod was bitter about the separation. President George A. Lintner was particularly angry, as is seen by a letter which he wrote late in 1837. He had doubtless forgotten that he himself had been a leader in the separation of the Hartwick Synod from the old Ministerium just seven years previously. In that letter he said:

I see that Wieting has made a statement with the [*Lutheran*] Ob[server]. Now I think that you had better give at once to the editor of [the] Ob[server] a compendious statement of all the principal facts connected with the establishment of the Franck[ean] Synod and expose them before the Lutheran Church in the United States."²⁸

Rejected by General Synod

The General Synod was even harsher in its attitude toward the new synod. When the Franckean Synod had decided in 1838 to unite with the General Synod, four delegates (two clerical and two lay) were chosen to attend its 1839 convention. But the delegates could not attend.²⁹ Perhaps it was just as well that they were not present, for they would have had to face a bitter disappointment in the abrupt and decisive rejection of their synod in the following resolution:

Whereas certain persons, claiming to be ministers and members of our Church, have formed themselves into ecclesiastical bodies, called "The Tennessee Synod" and also "The Franckean Synod"; and whereas, said persons are intro-

²⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1838, 13.

²⁷ *Lutheran Herald*, March 16, 1839, p. 44.

²⁸ Letter of Pres. George A. Lintner to Pres. Jacob Z. Senderling of the Hartwick Synod, dated Schoharie, N. Y., Nov. 22, 1837. In archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of Hartwick Synod.

²⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 25; 1839, 10-11.

ENTANGLEMENTS WITH HARTWICK SYNOD

ducing practices which we consider contrary to the Word of God, thereby causing disturbances and divisions in our churches: Therefore,

Resolved, That we deem it our sacred duty to give a public expression of our disapprobation of these proceedings, and to exhort the churches in our connection, and all Evangelical Lutheran churches in the United States, to beware of the efforts of these men to cause divisions and offences contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.³⁰

When the Franckean Synod met the following year the reaction to the General Synod was violent. Despite the plea of President Lawyer to meet the situation with "Christian love,"³¹ the Synod "solemnly and unanimously" adopted a series of stinging resolutions climaxed by this outburst:

In the opinion of this Synod, the "General Synod" which convened at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in June, 1839, by whatever name it may be known, should with deep humiliation and great contrition of soul, repent of its sins for having exercised such unjust, unauthorized and oppressive power in reference to the Ministers and Churches of this [Franckean] Synod.³²

Whether it was the bold assertion of the Franckean Synod, or more sober thinking by the delegates to the General Synod after the meeting, or both, it was certain that there were many doubts as to the wisdom of the action at that meeting. Consequently at the next meeting of the General Synod in 1841 there was considerable feeling that the harsh action of 1839 was "not in accordance with the spirit of the constitution, and is not the sentiment of the General Synod." But someone then tried to keep the whole business from being brought up again by moving that "consideration of the above resolution be indefinitely postponed." A roll call revealed that there were as many for considering it over again as there were against. It certainly did not soothe the feelings of the Franckean Synod men to learn that the deciding vote to postpone consideration indefinitely was cast by the president of the General Synod, who was none other than George Lintner, president of the Hartwick Synod! The resolution of censure was rescinded only in 1857.³³

ENTANGLEMENTS WITH HARTWICK SYNOD

The Hartwick Synod did not merely brush off the new synod in the way the Ministerium did. It was easy for the Ministerium to do that because the Franckean Synod embraced congregations in an area which

³⁰ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1839, 17.

³¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1840, 9.

³² *Ibid.*, 1840, 21.

³³ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1841, 20; 1857, 25; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1841, 23.

the Ministerium barely touched. It was different with the Hartwick Synod, for the new synod was operating on the same territory as the Hartwick Synod. That meant trouble for both synods.

For one thing the Hartwick Synod was itself only seven years old and the pulling away of four pastors meant that it had only eleven left.³⁴ Furthermore as President Senderling lamented, "so many vacancies had occurred in several very important committees that they were unable to transact business," and he had to call a special meeting of the Synod to reassign committee memberships.³⁵

To this must be added the fact that the members of the Hartwick Synod considered that the Franckeans were no longer Lutheran. Therefore the Hartwick Synod had a mission to perform to protect the congregations from such misguided leadership.

Accusations Against Franckean Synod

As a result the agitation was promptly begun by the Hartwick Synod men. In July, two months after the new synod was organized, a letter signed by four leaders of the Hartwick Synod was circulated among the congregations of both their own and the Franckean Synods. The letter even advised that copies be made and sent to certain individuals who should "lay it before the congregation," referring of course to the congregations of the Franckean Synod.³⁶

The letter accused the Franckean Synod pastors of having renounced the Lutheran faith, abandoned the Lutheran system of government and discipline, separated from the General Synod, and established a new order of ministers whom they called preachers.

The circularization of the accusations had been so well accomplished by the time the Franckean Synod met again in October of 1837 that President Lawyer took two hours at the opening session to present "a full consideration and impartial investigation" of all that had taken place.³⁷ Upon its completion it was to the credit of the new synod that

³⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 3-4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1837, 25-26.

³⁶ The original signed letter, dated Schoharie, July 18, 1837, addressed to President Jacob Z. Senderling of the Hartwick Synod, is in the archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England among Papers of Hartwick Synod. Its four accusations against the Franckean Synod are substantially reproduced in the answer given to it by President John Lawyer of the Franckean Synod, in *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 28-38.

³⁷ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 4. The report is given in detail in *Ibid.*, Oct., 1837, 23-38.

A season was then spent in special prayer to the Great Head of the Church, for divine guidance and blessing on all our consultations and deliberations. The Secretary, Bro[ther]s Cross and Van Alstine led in prayer, while the whole church on bended knees united with them.³⁸

Strife Within the Congregations

Agitation within some of the Franckean Synod congregations began about the time the letter was being circulated. The first came from the congregation at Sharon of which Philip Wieting was pastor. Several trustees of the congregation wrote President Senderling of the Hartwick Synod "lamenting the late secession of Philip Wieting, our pastor, from your body, and feeling it our duty and privilege as well as our firm determination, to remain in connection with the Hartwick Synod."³⁹

President Senderling visited the Sharon congregation two weeks later and conducted a meeting with a large number of the Sharon people present. Nothing was reported as to whether the pastor was present, or knew about the meeting, or what was decided.⁴⁰ But it could hardly be expected that the visit would be regarded as other than an intrusion.

A week later Senderling visited also the Sandlake congregation of which John Lawyer was pastor. This meeting too was conducted apparently without the knowledge or presence of the pastor. But a motion to remain with the Hartwick Synod was lost by a large majority. The minority group then held a meeting of its own and appointed two commissioners to attend the next meeting of the Hartwick Synod.⁴¹

At the meeting of the Hartwick Synod in September, 1837, commissioners were present from the Sharon parish, which included the congregation at New Rhinebeck, and from the Sandlake congregation.⁴²

The matter of both parishes was referred to an investigating committee which reported at that session that "a mournful division has taken place among said people, and that they as a body desire earnestly to continue in firm connection with this body, its order and doctrines."⁴³

The Synod then adopted what was certain to bring further trouble:

In order that the property of said congregations may continue to their use and benefit, and the congregation be restored to order and peace:

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct., 1837. 4.

³⁹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1837, 29.

⁴¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 15. No report of the meeting appears in the minutes of the Hartwick Synod.

⁴² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 4, 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1837, 11.

1. That they adhere with inflexible firmness to their connection with the Hartwick Synod.

2. That they convene as soon as possible, and fill up the vacancies in their church council, if any should occur.⁴⁴

When the Franckean Synod met a month later they had learned of the Hartwick Synod action and there was the expected uproar. The members protested the "holding of secret meetings in the bounds of said churches, and sowing the seeds of discord and dissension among the people," and stated forthrightly that such action "meets with the decided and entire disapprobation of this Synod." A concluding resolution called for "prayer to be offered to God, to restrain their efforts for the future."⁴⁵

Sharon Parish in the Courts

The troubles in Philip Wieting's parish of Sharon and New Rhinebeck developed into a serious problem and eventually reached the courts for adjudication. The minority group in the parish, the size of which does not appear in the minutes, persisted in endeavoring to keep the congregation in the Hartwick Synod.⁴⁶ In 1839 the group held services once a month, served by pastors of the Hartwick Synod.⁴⁷ By 1842 a pastor was called.⁴⁸

The Franckean Synod, on the other hand, complained that the Sharon parish was "continually kept in commotion by the unwarrantable interference" of members of the Hartwick Synod, and "their whole battery has of late been levelled, it appears, at this district."⁴⁹ Four years after the trouble started, Wieting reported that the district was "still the theater of trials and legal difficulties, and is likely to be so for some years at least."⁵⁰

By this time the matter had reached the courts, in which the minority group adhering to the Hartwick Synod sued Wieting and the congregations for the church property. Suit was begun in 1839 but was not argued until early in 1844 and decision rendered that year by Lewis H. Sandford, Assistant Vice-Chancellor.⁵¹

⁴⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 11.

⁴⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 12-13.

⁴⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 6, 18, 26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1839, 16-17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1842, 26.

⁴⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1839, 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1841, 9.

⁵¹ *State of New York, in Chancery. Philip Kniskern and others vs. Philip Wieting . . . and others. Opinion of the Hon. Lewis H. Sandford, Assistant Vice Chancellor, July 17, 1844 (N.Y., 1845), 72 pp.*

In a lengthy document of 72 pages Sandford decided in favor of the minority group because the defendants, Wieting and his Synod, did not accept, so Sandford ruled, the Augsburg Confession, but "held to the Bible, and nothing but the Bible";⁵² that they "appear to have patterned, in some respects, after a new sect denominating itself 'The Church of God,' which sprung out of the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania in 1830."⁵³

Furthermore, Sandford ruled, the Franckians were not Trinitarians because "most of the Unitarians believe in Christ's divinity, and could subscribe to his attributes as set forth in both the 4th and 11th sections of the Franckian declaration";⁵⁴ that the defendants "have adopted a rule or standard of faith which is different from the . . . faith and doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church . . . and that they have diverted the churches and church property . . . and perverted them to the preaching, teaching, and support of an essentially different faith and doctrine."⁵⁵

The property therefore, Sandford concluded, rightfully belonged to the minority group adhering to the Hartwick Synod and the defendants had to pay the costs of the suit.⁵⁶

Fortunately however the breach between the two synods had already begun to be healed. In 1843, six years after the split, the Hartwick Synod sent a delegate to the Franckian Synod.⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, the delegate was George W. Lewis, newly chosen pastor of the minority group of the split Sandlake congregation.⁵⁸

NEO-PIETISM

Since the Franckian Synod men were at the extreme left of the Lutheran Church in New York, one may be tempted to pass them by, as the New York Ministerium did, as of little or no consequence.

But while these men went to extremes, we shall never get to understand them or what they were trying to do unless we appreciate the fact that they were sincerely honest and thoroughly convinced of the rightness of their cause.

⁵² *State of New York, in Chancery*, cited above, 30, 38-39, 41.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁶ *State of New York, in Chancery*, cited above, 69-72.

⁵⁷ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1843, 10.

⁵⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 26.

The Rationalism of the New York Ministerium they could not stomach, because it was unscriptural. Nor could they stomach what they regarded as the unprogressive attitude of the old Ministerium which frowned on anything in the church that smacked of fervor and piety, especially in revivalistic meetings.

The Franckeans enthusiastically went along with the revolt that led to the formation of the Hartwick Synod, but they soon felt that that Synod was not going far enough, or at least not going in the right direction. The Hartwick Synod was becoming confessional, emphasizing increasingly that the Augsburg Confession was a symbol that must be accepted. But the men who were to organize the Franckean Synod went the other way—holiness was their keynote—a holy church in which there was a converted and holy ministry and lay members.

Holiness, Not Creeds or Confessions

In other words, the Franckeans had become Pietists pure and simple. If their Pietism did not match that of previous great American Lutheran Pietists such as Justus Falckner and Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, it was not because the Franckeans were less sincere, but because they expressed themselves according to the time and place in which they found themselves.

The Franckeans followed closely the pattern of the Pietist movement in Germany of the previous century. They even called themselves by the name of the great Pietist leader of Halle, August Herman Francke, and the first church building which they dedicated they named the "Franckean Chapel."⁵⁹ It was in that chapel that they had met to organize their new synod.

Their Pietistic objective was succinctly stated in a resolution adopted by the Synod soon after it was organized:

The chief object of this Synod is to promote the Redeemer's kingdom, by cultivating deep-toned piety in ministers and people, and by expansive benevolence and by indefatigable labor in the vineyard of the Lord.

[May] all our labors be directed to the supreme glory of God.⁶⁰

This "deep-toned piety in ministers and people" was the heart of the life and work of the Franckeans. Chief among the complaints that led to the formation of their synod had been the "admission of uncon-

⁵⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1838, 6-7.

verted persons as members of the church" and "admitting unconverted men to the ministry."⁶¹ Young people in particular were being taken into the church membership of the New York Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod by the rite of confirmation "who have no experimental knowledge of their condition, no longing desire for pardon and know nothing about faith in Jesus Christ." The same was true of the ministers who were not being "examined with sufficient closeness and rigor on the subject of their own conversion."⁶²

These "views of the Franckean Synod,"⁶³ were adequately provided for in the constitution of the new synod, in repeated resolutions at synodical meetings, and in the writings of its leaders. In every case, conversion was of first importance, not the acceptance of a creed or confession. That was the Pietist way.

Conversion of Church Members

Concerning church members, the Franckean's "Declaration of Faith" stated quite forcefully that for admission to membership

There is a necessity of a radical change of heart and none should be admitted to the membership and privileges of the church, but such as give a credible evidence of being born again, and are living according to the precepts and requirements of the gospel.⁶⁴

This was just as strenuously advocated in practice. An editorial in the official *Lutheran Herald* stated that admission to church membership was not simply the responsibility of ministers "confirming persons as it is called," but

The admission of candidates to church membership is the act of the Church. A candidate relates his experience and is examined in the presence of the whole Church. When this is done it enables the brethren and sisters to obtain a knowledge of the character of the candidate, and generally [to] secure their confidence and love. This is what constitutes Christian fellowship.⁶⁵

This of course raises the question as to the means of grace and particularly of infant baptism. To the Franckean baptism and the Lord's Supper were apparently not sacraments but merely "gospel ordinances," defined thus in their "Declaration of Faith":

⁶¹ Statement of the officers of the Franckean Synod addressed "To the members of the Lutheran Churches in Connexion with the Franckean Synod," attached as an appendix to the *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 21.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 21-22.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 12.

⁶⁵ *Lutheran Herald*, April 15, 1842, 61.

Christ has instituted the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the perpetual observance and edification of the church; baptism is a significant ordinance, and represents the necessity of holiness of heart, and the Lord's Supper is frequently to be celebrated as a token of faith in the atonement of Christ and of brotherly love.⁶⁶

The Franckeans did not accept the historic Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration for infants. That led to charges being spread around that they denied infant baptism itself, to which they replied vigorously that "we now and as always we have done, as a Synod, firmly believe in the validity of infant baptism."⁶⁷

But they just as definitely rejected infant baptism as a means of grace. "We unanimously reject the doctrine of infant church membership," said the Synod's *Lutheran Herald* editorially, "or that infants are baptized into the church. Our doctrine is, that members of the church must be *professed Christians*; that is, persons who avow publicly their repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ, and a submission of the soul to the laws of Christ's kingdom."⁶⁸

A Holy Ministry

With regard to the piety of the ministry, the Franckeans never ceased to keep the ideal of a "holy" ministry before them. When a student became a candidate for licensure he was subjected to a thoroughgoing examination, first as to his religious experience and later as to his educational qualifications. The examination conducted at the first meeting of the Synod in 1837 was divided into two clear-cut parts.

The three candidates were examined first "on the subject of experimental religion, by relating their religious experience before the whole synod, and stating their motives in desiring to enter the ministry." They then retired. When the "ministerium" was satisfied with this part of the examination, the candidates were then "admitted to a further examination, in the various branches of theology and church history." One of the candidates, Nicholas Van Alstine, had a wider education than the other two, so he "was also examined in the Hebrew and Greek languages." The examination having proved "satisfactory," the candidates were then approved for licensure.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 12; amended in *Ibid.*, 1844, 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1842, 19.

⁶⁸ *Lutheran Herald*, March 15, 1842, 45.

⁶⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 15-16.

During his course of studies the licentiate was obligated by the Synod's constitution not only to "pursue his theological studies with diligence," but also to "attend to every duty and means to improve his heart in holiness and grace."⁷⁰

In his ministry the pastor was continually reminded in resolutions and exhortations such as the following:

The people of God are called upon to do all they can to raise up a *holy* and *educated* ministry.

We believe in the doctrine of *Christian Holiness*, and we feel called upon by the sacredness of our profession, and bound by the Word of God, not only to receive and preach it in the abstract, but to reduce it to practice and urge it upon our people as a gospel requirement.⁷¹

The Bible Alone

The Franckians clearly revealed their Pietism also in their conception of the Scriptures and of the church's creeds and confessions, even of the church itself.

They omitted all references to creeds and confessions in their "Declaration of Faith," stating simply that "we believe the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and contain an infallible rule of faith and practice for mankind."⁷²

Whenever they wrote about the subject, they were almost vehement in asserting that they would have nothing to do with creeds and confessions. In an editorial in the first number of the *Lutheran Herald*, President Lawyer of the Synod put it this way:

We have no hesitation in declaring it as our firm belief that the present [days] are *times of regeneration*—a crisis, which is undermining and breaking the fetters of creeds, confessions and human systems—annihilating the power of antiquated customs and usages, and destroying the ancient landmarks, which have been conceived and reared in the ages of darkness and iniquity.

We take our stand on the firm basis of the Reformation. The Bible is the work of God, but symbols the work of man—the Bible is the religion of Protestant Christians, but creeds and confessions are the religion of orthodox professors.⁷³

In their denial of creeds and confessions the Franckians agreed heartily with Professor George B. Miller of Hartwick Seminary, who in his address in 1831 on the "Fundamental Principle of the Reformation" brushed off "human creeds" as follows:

⁷⁰ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, May, 1837, 9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1839, 16; 1840, 23. Italicized words are thus in the minutes.

⁷² *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 11.

⁷³ *Lutheran Herald*, January 1, 1839, 4.

All human creeds in short are no better than a Chinese shoe, by which the living foot, being cramped, never attains its proper shape and natural proportions. A better taste, if not a holier spirit is gaining ground in the Christian world. These wretched partition walls that have so long separated those who ought to look upon each other as brethren of one family are beginning to be less regarded, and the shibboleths of a darker age are no longer employed as signals to murder the character, if not the person, of one that belongs to a different tribe. And as the Lutheran Church took the lead in the first Reformation, may it not be behindhand in the second! God forbid that I should submit to any other yoke than the yoke of Christ, or call any other master besides him.⁷⁴

The Franckeans thought so highly of Professor Miller and his Reformation address that they made it the most prominent article in the first three numbers of their *Lutheran Herald*, giving to each installment the entire front page.⁷⁵

The Franckeans, according to President Lawyer's address at their second meeting, did not actually "renounce" the Augsburg Confession, nor did they "form anything as a substitute for it." Their "declaration of faith contains doctrines plainly revealed in the Bible, and so far as the Augsburg Confession agrees with the Bible, so far it agrees with our declaration." But if they were asked "whether we believe all that is contained in the Augsburg Confession, or in the doctrinal articles of the same, in all its points and parts, we do frankly and candidly declare that we do not."⁷⁶

The Franckeans did not balk at the word "orthodoxy." On the contrary they made much of it in a sort of slogan, like the one printed at the head of page one of every number of their *Lutheran Herald* from 1841: "Its principles are those of the Reformation, and its orthodoxy that of the Bible."⁷⁷

Biblical Title of Bishop

Their "orthodoxy of the Bible" led the Franckeans to at least one curious custom, that of taking to themselves the title of "Bishop." This was started in the second year of the Synod at the ordination service, when the candidates "were duly set apart and ordained bishops and ministers of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ G[eorge] B. Miller, *A Discourse . . . on the Fundamental Principle of the Reformation* (N. Y., 1831, 16 pp.), 9-10.

⁷⁵ *Lutheran Herald*, Jan. 1, Jan. 15, and Feb. 1, 1839.

⁷⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 29-30.

⁷⁷ *Lutheran Herald*, vols. 3 and 4, 1841-1842.

⁷⁸ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 23.

The following year the title was formally adopted by the Synod, with a careful explanation as to its correctness:

By an impartial, critical and exegetical investigation of the Bible on this subject, it appears clearly to us that the appellation of elder and bishop, are terms interchangeably employed to designate the identical office, and that either of them is the scriptural name for the minister of Jesus Christ.

The appellation of *bishop* seems to us the most appropriate to designate the character and employment of every ordained minister of Jesus Christ, and that this title be henceforth applied to all such persons indiscriminately.⁷⁹

As may be expected there was much criticism, probably much levity too, over the custom, and public explanations were in order. One such was given in some detail in an editorial in the *Lutheran Herald*, with the conclusion that "every pastor of a church or churches under his ministerial care and oversight is entitled to the appellation of bishop, according to Scripture usage and meaning." This was explained on the basis of I Peter 5:1-3, Titus 1:4-7, and Acts 20:17-28.⁸⁰

The Franckians were the first but not the only American Lutherans to use the title of "Bishop." In 1843 they learned that the Alleghany Synod and the English Ohio Synod both were using it, and several years later the same report came from the Pittsburgh Synod.⁸¹ The Franckians continued the custom for nearly 20 years, after which the title was dropped altogether in the minutes of their synodical meetings.

Independent Churches of God

Unlike other Lutherans in America who emphasized the authority of the synod, the Franckians emphasized the authority of the individual congregation.

True, in their "Declaration of Faith" they spoke of Christians giving "entire submission to the regular authority and discipline of the church and observance of all its institutions,"⁸² but when they used the term "church" they meant the local congregation. This was made quite clear in a number of editorials in the *Lutheran Herald*, like the following:

We never did acknowledge the authority of any ecclesiastical body called "The Church." Our churches of God are independent Evangelic Lutheran Churches. Every Church of God, in connection with our Synod, is a whole and

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1839, 12.

⁸⁰ *Lutheran Herald*, March 1, 1841, 35.

⁸¹ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1843, 20-21, quoting the minutes of 1842 of the Alleghany and English Ohio Synods; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1846, 19, quoting the minutes of the Pittsburgh Synod of 1845.

⁸² *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, May, 1837, 12.

complete church, and we do not derive our existence or our nourishment from "The Lutheran Church" and of course we are not a *branch* of it.⁸³

A gospel church has its origin in the New Testament. Our churches are independent, and entirely democratic in their form of government.⁸⁴

This emphasis was to be found just as clearly in a number of reports of the synodical presidents:

Our form of church government [is] founded upon the Scriptures, securing the churches the power to exercise discipline. We bow to no ecclesiastical tyranny or oppression. Our liberty is that of the gospel.⁸⁵

We are distinguished for our independence and the exercise of self-government. We bow not to human tribunals, neither submit to the legislation of higher judicatories.⁸⁶

To the Franckeans therefore the synod was merely "an association or confederation" of completely independent "religious or Christian societies, termed in the New Testament *Churches of God*." In the use of the title "Evangelic Lutheran" they had a ready explanation too:

Our associated churches of God are called Evangelic because they are founded upon the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are called *Lutheran* because they and their ministers are *Reformers*, and believe and teach that the Bible is the only rule for the faith, practice and government of the churches.⁸⁷

By formal vote at its second meeting the Synod was declared to be "no *judicatory* but only an *advisory* body, claiming no right to legislate for our respective congregations, nor to receive appeals from them and to review, reverse or confirm their decisions." The latter had as its particular target the General Synod's constitution for synods.⁸⁸

This doctrine of the Church became part of the constitution of the Synod in 1847:

Because every church being ordained a complete depository of ecclesiastical power by the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore every ecclesiastical body distinct from the church, by whatever name it may be called, is only advisory, and has no authority to confirm or reverse the decisions of a church."⁸⁹

Revivals

The holiness principle was intimately related to the revivalistic or protracted meeting. The parochial reports and the reports of the synodical

⁸³ *Lutheran Herald*, Jan. 1, 1842, 6. In this and subsequent references, the italicized words are thus in the original.

⁸⁴ *Lutheran Herald*, April 15, 1842, 61.

⁸⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1839, 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1844, 4.

⁸⁷ *Lutheran Herald*, March 15, 1842, 45.

⁸⁸ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 11, 34; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1833, 57.

⁸⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, June, 1847, 29.

presidents continuously made mention of revivals in the congregations, of which the following are typical:

Herkimer District. On the 31st of January last a protracted meeting was commenced in the congregation, which resulted in about 40 conversions, and the greater part of them remain steadfast in the faith.

Canada District. During the past year the Lord has graciously poured out his Spirit, and there have been at least 40 conversions. There are now three weekly prayer meetings in the churches.⁹⁰

The year 1843 appeared to have had more than the usual number of revivals:

This has been a year of revivals—such as the country has not seen since the years '31 and '32. All denominations of Christians have shared largely in the outpouring of the Spirit of God. We have enjoyed some of the most extensive revivals in some of the districts of this Synod.⁹¹

The accessions in the Franckean Synod that year (1843) were more than double those of the previous year, for a total of 513, of whom 111 were received by adult baptism.⁹²

Revivals usually continued for three or four days. Occasionally some went into longer periods. Here is the description of one extending over two weeks, conducted by the pastor of the congregation and assisted by four other pastors of the Synod and four young theological students:

A protracted meeting commenced in the Franckean Chapel in Fordsboro, on the 23rd of December [1838] and continued until January 6th. For the greater part of the time there were three sermons preached every day, besides prayer meetings and exhortations. The congregations were large and very attentive. There were upward of 30 sermons preached, close, pointed and evangelic, and God has attended the exercise with his Holy Spirit. The church has been greatly blessed and revived, and sinners have been convinced and converted. To God we give all the glory.⁹³

There were occasions, perhaps frequent, when the revival became an intensely emotional experience. One such, conducted by Philip Wieting, was graphically described by an eyewitness:

The house was crowded, sitting and standing room and all. He [Wieting] followed the sermon with an exhortation, pouring forth a perfect torrent of entreaty as he descended step by step from the pulpit to the altar. By this time his entire nature was fully roused and brought into action. Every feature of his face, every glance of his eye, every movement of his hands as they rose and fell, and of his body as it swayed to and fro, indicated and produced the most intense excitement.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1840, 12.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1843, 6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1843, 8. On those received otherwise, see below, p. 163.

⁹³ *Lutheran Herald*, Feb. 1, 1839, 20.

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His voice was like the blast of a bugle, elevated, sonorous, of awful compass and thrilling intonation. The vast realm of motive, past, present, future, was open to his view, and the terrors of Sinai, the touching accents of Calvary, the appalling scenes of the final judgment, were made to pass before the audience in rapid succession, and as realities which could not be questioned. From every source, thoughts darted like sunbeams; illustrations flashed like chain lightning; arguments fell like crashing thunderbolts.

He left the altar, got out into the aisle, the crowd making room for him as he advanced, until he finally reached the middle of the church. The scene was awful, the influence overwhelming, the appeal resistless. Tears flowed in torrents. The cries of the audience became well nigh deafening. Ministerial brethren exchanged inquisitive glances of concernment, and one started towards him intending by some means to arrest the effort. But as he approached, perfectly unconscious of his presence, Mr. Wieting made a violent backward gesture, and the brother's face received the full force of the blow from his hand. The effect was neither felt by speaker nor audience; though the smitten brother returned to his seat. From every part of the house the people rushed to the altar for prayers, and when the appeal ended there were *one hundred persons* on the anxious seat.⁹⁴

Now and then a new congregation emerged as the result of a season of revival. An interesting account comes from the district of Hartwick Seminary. In the spring of 1839 President Lawyer of the Franckean Synod was invited there, and reported that "God poured out his Spirit in this place and we had a glorious revival." In June he became pastor of the congregation and on his first Sunday "administered the Lord's Supper and experienced a blessed season." Eight members were received.

On the same Sabbath we commenced a protracted meeting on Hartwick Hill, called Hinman Corners, in a school building. Brothers Van Alstine and Wieting assisted me. The meeting continued about three weeks and about 30 were converted to God.

A month later the members met in the chapel of Hartwick Academy and organized the congregation.⁹⁵

MORAL REFORM

Holiness was not simply an ideal to the Franckeans. It was an intensely practical matter, to be evidenced by what they called moral reform.

The Franckeans, it must be said, were really good Lutherans, for they accepted the doctrine of justification by faith and made it part of their "Declaration of Faith":

⁹⁴ Henry L. Dox, *Memoir of Rev. Philip Wieting*, 154-156.

⁹⁵ *Church Record of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* [in the district of] *Hartwick Seminary, New York*, vol. 1, p. [1]. In 1947 the book was in the custody of Pastor Emeritus Dr. H. Dennington Hayes.

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Men are not justified on account of any merits or works of their own, but are freely justified by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, for whose sake only God pardons sin.⁹⁶

But while they taught that good works were not necessary for salvation, the Franckeans nevertheless stressed good works as a "solemn obligation" in the life of the Christian. Here is how they expressed it in their "Declaration of Faith," under the heading of "Duties of Christians":

The keeping of the moral law as a rule of life, a conscientious and uniform attendance on public and private worship, and an entire submission to the regular authority and discipline of the church, and observance of all its institutions; and whatever else may tend to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, are duties which every Christian is under solemn obligation to perform.⁹⁷

This was repeated over and over in reports and addresses and resolutions. President Lawyer for example stated in one of his reports that "among the subjects" which he deemed "necessary to promote the cause of religion" were temperance, the abolition of American slavery, the cause of peace, the Christian Sabbath."⁹⁸

Acting as a synod, the Franckeans went a step further. They adopted with but one dissenting vote this strong statement:

Under the present glare of the concentrated light which has been thrown upon the subject of temperance, abolition, and other moral reforms, no church can close its doors and bar its pulpit against the discussion of them, by the minister, or any fully acceded person, without rendering itself obnoxious to the charge of fundamental corruption, and is worthy of the disfellowship of all the truly pious of the world.⁹⁹

Temperance

The two causes of moral reform to which the Franckeans gave their utmost attention were temperance, which really meant total abstinence, and the abolition of slavery.

The Franckean Synod put these two right into its constitution at its organization in 1837:

No minister of the gospel shall be a member of this Synod who shall not sign the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a beverage; or who is a slaveholder, or traffics in human beings, or advocates the system of slavery as it exists in these United States.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 12.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1839, 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1845, 27.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 9.

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[Concerning lay delegates] . . . Neither shall he be a slaveholder, nor engaged in the manufacture and traffic of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage.¹⁰¹

A year later the total abstinence pledge was "respectfully and affectionately recommended to the members of all our churches." At the same time the license law was denounced as "directly calculated to perpetuate the evils of intemperance" and the Synod strongly advocated its appeal.¹⁰² The following year (1839) the New York State Temperance Society was approved by the Synod because its churches approved the Society's principles.¹⁰³

Then the question of the use of liquors for medicinal purposes was cleared up. The Synod adopted a resolution "that no person, in view of the light of the age, can use them [intoxicating drinks] on any occasion innocently except for mechanical and medicinal purposes."¹⁰⁴

But a price was exacted for such rigid observance. Before the Synod was five years old the report was made that "the ministers and churches of this synod were persecuted and slandered for the stand they had taken," and, what was worse, "by ministers of the gospel and professed Christians."¹⁰⁵

This section may well end with the picturesque description of how to get rid of the "old monster alcohol." The solution was in the report of the Synod's committee on temperance in 1846:

It will therefore depend upon the continued exertions of this body, and all the friends of temperance, to remove the last vestige of drunkenness; which can only be done by bleeding the old monster alcohol to death, and hear his expiring groan.¹⁰⁶

Interestingly enough there appears to be no reference in the Synod's minutes or in the writings of its leaders about the use of grape juice in the Communion. That was doubtless so completely taken for granted that not even a reference needed to be made of it.

Abolition of Slavery

The Franckeans were always serious about the Lord's business, but if they excelled in zeal in any one endeavor it was in their agitation for

¹⁰¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 8, amended in *Ibid.*, 1838, 7-8.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1838, 19.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1839, 12; *Lutheran Herald*, July 16, 1839, 106.

¹⁰⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1840, 18-19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1842, 16-17.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1846, 13.

the abolition of slavery. They boasted, and it was true, that their synod was "alone as yet of all the synods in the Lutheran Church who have considered the subject; except those synods which have either defended, advocated, or apologized for the system of American slavery."¹⁰⁷

To speak out boldly against slavery became part of the program of the Franckeans when they organized their synod in 1837. At the very first session they would have none of the appeasement policy of the Hartwick Synod, but resolved that "we do not deem it inexpedient for ecclesiastical bodies to interfere with the abolition of slavery"; and then went into detail:

We have abundant cause for deep humiliation before God, that, as a denomination, we are so deeply involved in the *Sin of Slavery*, and that as many of our ministers practice the crime, and that so many others justify them in their iniquity.

We view the traffic in human beings as carried on in this country, and between ministers of the gospel and members of churches, as revolting to humanity and as repugnant to the laws of Christ, as ever was the foreign slave trade.¹⁰⁸

Apparently the statement in 1837 was not strong enough, so they stated it over again two years later in these scorching terms:

We, the ministers and delegates of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, do repudiate the whole system of American slavery, as equally opposed to civil and religious liberty; as endangering the rights and liberties of the free wherever it is tolerated; as a disgrace to the government where it exists; as supporting and encouraging the most corrupt and depraved state of morals; as an offence to God; and as provoking his just indignation.

It is the duty of Christians throughout the land to come out from the *Babel* of ruins, according to the divine command, lest its rotten and crumbling mass should fall on them and grind them to powder, the cries of "the Union" and "the peace of the Church," to the contrary notwithstanding.¹⁰⁹

Then they made it equally emphatic as to what was to be expected of the local congregations:

We recommend to the ministers and churches in connection with this Synod not to admit into their pulpits, or to the communion of the Lord's Supper any person who is a slaveholder or traffics in human beings.¹¹⁰

The most aggressive step was taken in 1842 when the Franckeans issued their "Fraternal Appeal," embracing their anti-slavery sentiments and calling upon the other Lutheran synods to express themselves simi-

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1838, 30.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, May, 1837, 18.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1839, 15-16; *Lutheran Herald*, June 16, 1839, 91.

¹¹⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1841, 24.

larly. The Appeal was printed in the *Lutheran Herald* and a copy was sent "to each Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the United States."¹¹¹

The following year report was made of the response of the synods to the Appeal.¹¹² The South Carolina and Virginia Synods took no notice of it. The Maryland Synod tabled it because it "cannot entertain any subject not immediately connected with our synodical business." To this the Franckean Synod committee slyly commented that the Maryland Synod had considered it synodical business to denounce the evil of intemperance. The Alleghany Synod was silent, which was regrettable because that synod was esteemed an "active and zealous body of ministers and people." The Ohio Synod was also silent, which "greatly surprised" the Franckean Synod committee.

The Synod of the West was "grateful to the Franckean Synod for their well-meant attempt to enlighten us on the subject," but they recommended to the Franckeans "the propriety of considering well the measures of the Abolitionists in the present day, *before they act*." To which the Franckean committee once again slyly commented that it "rejoiced to hear that this Synod are willing to *act* as soon as they are convinced; but we can scarcely believe that the members of that body can be ignorant of the subject of American slavery. We hope they will soon obtain more light, and *act* accordingly."

In New York, the Ministerium took no notice of it, and the Hartwick Synod "refused to consider or respond" to the appeal.¹¹³

Several years later, however, the Franckeans rejoiced to learn that "three [Lutheran] synods have spoken out on the subject," though they did not mention them by name. One of the synods was the Alleghany Synod, which "denounced the system [of American slavery] as a moral, civil and religious evil, and dishonorable to God and man."¹¹⁴

This impelled the Franckeans to take a bolder step in the decision that they "cannot hold fellowship with any synod or other ecclesiastical body which under its jurisdiction or in its connection tolerates, apologizes for, or is silent on the sin of American slavery." They pointed out that this

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1842, 12. Unfortunately, the Appeal was not printed in the minutes. It was printed in the *Lutheran Herald*, vol. 4, no. 13, but this number is missing in the only known existing set in the Lutheran Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

¹¹² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1843, 20-21, quoting from or referring to the minutes of the respective synods.

¹¹³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1846, 15.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1845, 10; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1845, 14.

action would hold "especially if said ecclesiastical bodies justify and defend the above specified sin by an appeal to the Holy Scriptures, which in the judgment of this synod is blasphemy of Almighty God and a shocking prostitution of his Word."¹¹⁵

There appeared to be only one incident relating to this explosive subject in which the Franckeans did not take decisive action. This had to do with the American Bible Society and its connection with slavery. The Franckeans cherished the Society, but when it was learned that there were slaveholders among its officials and members, a resolution was introduced to the effect that "while we highly approve of the object of the American Bible Society, we deeply deprecate its connection with the system of slavery."

After long discussion and no agreement, a motion was made to postpone the matter indefinitely. But that would have looked like appeasement. So another resolution was promptly introduced, stating that "in view of the present character and position of the American Bible Society, we will withhold our contributions until a *counteraction* against slavery be taken." But even this was not satisfactory, and it was tabled "for future discussion."¹¹⁶ The Synod then adjourned, and nothing further was heard of the matter.

During its early period the Franckean Synod had added support in the anti-slavery movement from one of its own members, the Negro pastor Daniel A. Payne.¹¹⁷ He had taught school in Charleston, South Carolina, for five years, but in 1834 the State Legislature had enacted a law prohibiting Negro teachers and Payne left the state.

Arriving in the North, Payne studied at Gettysburg Seminary from 1835 to 1837 and became an ardent abolitionist. Because he spoke as one having come from the South his words had added force. Telling an incident like the following would arouse almost any group of northern listeners:

A few nights ago between 10 and 11 o'clock a runaway slave came to my house where I live [at Troy, N. Y.] for safety and succor. I asked him if he was a Christian. "No, sir," said he, "white men treat us so bad in Mississippi that we can't be Christians."

¹¹⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1845, 18, 21.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1842, 15.

¹¹⁷ Data and excerpts from his addresses are from the "Speech by Brother Daniel A. Payne, delivered at the Franckean Synod, June 1, 1839," in *Lutheran Herald*, Aug. 1, 1839, 113-14. An account of his ordination by the Franckean Synod is given below, p. 152.

Payne must have been a forceful speaker. In an anti-slavery address which he made before the Franckean Synod in 1839 he concluded with this fiery peroration (*italics are his*):

In a word, slavery tramples the laws of the living God under its hallowed feet—weakens and destroys the influence which the laws are calculated to exert over the mind of man; and constrains the oppressed to blaspheme the name of the Almighty. For I have often heard them sneeringly say, that "*The Almighty made Charleston on a Saturday night when he was weary, and in a great hurry.*" O, Brethren of the Franckean Synod! Awake! *AWAKE!* to the battle, and hurl the hottest thunders of divine truth at the head of this cruel monster, until he shall fall to rise no more; and the groans of the enslaved are converted into the songs of the free!

Sabbath Observance

In the movement for better Sabbath observance the Franckeans were right out in front and in 1838 defined Sabbath observance in terms that a Puritan of old would have taken pride in:¹¹⁸

It is the sense of this Synod that travelling on the Sabbath, paying social visits, operating post-offices, delivering and receiving letters and papers, running stages and investing money in Sabbath-breaking establishments, are violations of the Sabbath and sins against God.

At the same time they declared just as emphatically that observance had to start with pastors and church members:

There is no hope of a reform on this subject, until ministers and church members shall adopt the principle of entire abstinence from all its profanations, and unite in maintaining strict discipline in regard to every violation of the Fourth Commandment.

Like the Hartwick Synod the Franckeans laid much of the blame on the rulers of the land, but as usual stated it more forcefully:

The sins of Sabbath breaking appear to be growing in the land. Not only the ignorant rabble are guilty of this heinous crime, but the seeds of this abomination are sown and springing up in those who stand high in rank and fill responsible stations. Our legislative halls, at the close of the last session of Congress, have been defiled by an act which merits the frowns of the Christian Church, the decided disapprobation of every lover of sound morality, and the curse of a Holy God.¹¹⁹

The Puritan Sabbath defined in 1838 had a few more prohibitions tacked on eight years later: "reading books and papers of immoral tendency, writing letters, etc., which are not of a religious nature, together

¹¹⁸ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 17.

¹¹⁹ Report of the Franckean Synod's Committee on the Sabbath, approved by the Synod, in *Lutheran Herald*, June 16, 1839, 91.

with the non-attendance of God's sanctuary without a reasonable excuse, and in vain and worldly conversations."¹²⁰

War and Peace

The Franckeans started their agitation against war shortly after the organization of their synod. That was nearly a decade before the Hartwick Synod got around to it. As usual, they went all out in it, in these sweeping declarations:

As the sense of this Synod, the practice of war is contrary to the spirit and principles of the gospel, and ought to be discountenanced by the followers of the Prince of Peace in every lawful and proper manner.

It is our duty as disciples of Jesus Christ, to do whatever is within our power to secure the immediate, universal and permanent abolition of war.¹²¹

Some years later their declaration sounded like pacifism: "To give countenance to or engage in war is to stand opposed to the nature and genius of the gospel of Christ, and incur the Divine malediction."¹²² In harmony with that position, they further declared that it was "inconsistent for any member of this Synod to act as chaplain in any military parade."¹²³

The war with Mexico, as was to be expected, was roundly condemned as "wrong, selfish and wicked in the extreme, without mitigation, commenced and carried on for the sole protection, perpetuation and enlargement of the system of American slavery."¹²⁴

Licentiousness

The moral evil of licentiousness also came in for condemnation early in the Synod's life. The "church and pulpit were to speak plainly on this subject and no longer to manifest a depraved, culpable and reckless spirit in cloaking this atrocious vice with pretended 'delicacy.'" Without resorting to "delicacy," but in the usual picturesque language, they declared:

We believe that the Church of God is under obligation to suppress vice and promote virtue, stand as a lighthouse in this gloomy world, and raise a warning voice to all who are drawn by this siren's alluring song down to the gates of the pit, that they might speedily strive to ascend the hill of virtue, and through

¹²⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1846, 17, 18.

¹²¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 17-18.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1845, 17.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1845, 22.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1846, 28.

the Redeemer's blood pluck the laurels of purity and holiness in unfading bloom on the delectable mount of the heavenly Zion.¹²⁵

The double standard of morality was just as severely condemned. The Synod maintained that "licentious men should be held by all virtuous persons and are held by this Synod, in the same disrepute as licentious women."¹²⁶

Use of Tobacco

One of the curious incidents had to do with agitation to abolish the use of tobacco. Tobacco was called the "sad precursor to the whiskey-jug,"¹²⁷ and a resolution was offered to the effect that:

The use of tobacco in all its forms is a physical and moral injury, and we will not use it ourselves, nor countenance it in others unrebuked.¹²⁸

There must have been some interesting discussion on the question, for while it was adopted, it was one of the rare occasions when the decision was not unanimous. The vote was 14 to 7. Nearly twenty years later however the matter came up again and that time it was settled decisively.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 10-11.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1839, 13.

¹²⁷ *Lutheran Herald*, Dec. 1, 1841, editorial, p. 179.

¹²⁸ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1840, 28.

¹²⁹ Below, p. 186.

Chapter 6

The Three Synods

NEW YORK MINISTERIUM

While the Hartwick Synod was getting itself established, and the Franckean Synod was about to organize, the New York Ministerium was already, in 1836, half a century old. Oddly enough it did not celebrate its anniversary that year but waited until 1845, when it held its "50th meeting."¹ It will be remembered that in the first decade of its existence the Ministerium did not meet annually as had been planned, hence the "50th meeting" did not occur until 1845.

Semi-Centenary

The Ministerium should really have celebrated its semi-centenary in 1836, for it had much to celebrate about.

For one thing, it was on the way to a phenomenal growth, due to the accelerating influx of German immigrants, many of whom were Lutherans. Already in 1836 the home mission leaders reported that the German immigrants "are to be met with in every city, town and village" of New York. But they had no idea how much greater the German immigration would be in the decade to come.

In that year too (1836) the home mission leaders projected a home missions program that was far-reaching in its influence and to which the Ministerium responded heartily.

While all this was taking place, the work of reconciliation between the Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod came to completion in 1836 in re-establishing "a more hearty co-operation in promoting the great interest of the church."

¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1844, 27; 1845, 3-4.

There was still another cause for celebrating. The Ministerium in 1836 threw off the last vestiges of its Rationalism and most of its isolationism, in accepting the doctrinal basis of the General Synod and becoming united with that body.

Confessional Development

Much of the advance in the Ministerium's confessional position was due doubtless to the fact that many of the pastors coming from Germany were conservative, with a genuine appreciation of historic Lutheranism and its confessions. Almost all entered the Ministerium and their influence was added to that of native leaders like President Henry N. Pohlman in developing the Ministerium's appreciation of the Lutheran confessions.

But even before the influence of the European pastors made itself felt the Ministerium was shaking off the last of its Rationalism and was about to do the same to its isolationism. The withdrawal of the group which formed the Hartwick Synod in 1830 likely hastened this. Only five years later the Ministerium felt convinced of the need of "a closer union and more perfect co-operation of all our synods" within the General Synod.

But the old isolationist spirit died hard. The Ministerium was willing to go along only because the General Synod by amending its constitution had thereby "manifested a disposition to meet our views."²

The revisions in the General Synod's constitution were not major ones. One had to do with a larger ratio of representation from the synods. Another provided that each synod could adopt or reject any liturgical books which the General Synod might propose. The third contained a doctrinal statement, though not specific: "All regularly constituted Lutheran synods, holding the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as taught by our Church" could unite with the General Synod. The fourth specified more definitely the procedure for amending the constitution of the General Synod.³

The matter was discussed at length at the Ministerium's meeting in 1836. Most of the members were in favor of union with the General Synod but the minority opposition was strong. Interestingly enough, the

² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1835, 15.

³ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1835, 23-24. The constitution before being amended is on pp. 57-63.

old congregations in New York City and Albany both were against union.⁴

When the final vote was taken approving the union, there was a string of provisos to make certain that the Ministerium retained as much independence as possible. As a matter of fact one might well wonder whether the Ministerium was uniting with the General Synod, or the General Synod with the Ministerium. The principal points of the provisos were:

That we do not recognize all the principles contained in the "constitution for synods."

That the General Synod be regarded as an advisory body only, and that none of its proceedings be binding upon us, until acted upon by this Ministerium.

That we retain the present constitution of our own Ministerium and our present Hymn Book and Liturgy.⁵

The General Synod however was so overjoyed in 1837 to get the Ministerium into its ranks that it swallowed all the provisos without a question. Its members "hailed with peculiar gratification our brethren of the New York Synod as delegates to the General Synod, and hope that the good example of that revered body will soon be imitated by all the district synods of our church in the United States, who are as yet not connected with this body."⁶

The joyous reception by the General Synod paid off. The Ministerium took the General Synod's "hope" quite literally, and promptly instructed its delegate to the Pennsylvania Ministerium to urge that body "affectionately and earnestly to unite with the General Synod."⁷ That the delegate did not succeed was not his fault, for the Pennsylvania Ministerium was not ready to unite until 1853.⁸

The General Synod turned out to be all that the Ministerium members had hoped for, and more. "I am more and more convinced," declared President Pohlman in 1843, "of the excellence of its organization. There is none of that disposition to 'lord it over God's heritage' we so much feared."⁹

⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1836, 19-20.

⁶ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1837, 18; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1837, 10.

⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1839, 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1840, 6; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1853, 5.

⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 20.

Advances Confessionally Beyond General Synod

By 1851 it was manifest that the Ministerium was advancing confessionally more rapidly than the General Synod. That year the "German members of the Ministerium at a private meeting held during the annual convention" adopted a resolution commending *Der Lutherische Herold* because it was "well adapted to inform our people respecting the confessions of our Church, and to confirm and establish them in their attachment and allegiance to them."¹⁰ At the same convention a special committee was "instructed to inquire as to the propriety of inserting the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism" in the Ministerium's model constitution for its congregations.¹¹

By 1855 the word "orthodoxy" was used in connection with candidates for licensure, when the report of the examining committee stated that there was "no doubt on the subject of the intellectual qualifications" of the candidates "nor of the orthodoxy of their views."¹²

Meanwhile the confessional movement was growing also in the General Synod. That movement became a challenge to what was called "American Lutheranism," that is, the kind of Lutheranism that had been generally practiced in the General Synod, with no distinct Lutheran confessional position, certainly not beyond that of accepting the Augsburg Confession as "substantially correct." In 1855 Professor Samuel S. Schmucker, brilliant advocate of "American Lutheranism," published a pamphlet titled the *Definite Synodical Platform*,¹³ which claimed to be "constructed in accordance with the principles of the General Synod."

The *Definite Platform* intended simply to point out five errors in the Augsburg Confession and "with these few exceptions we retain the entire Augsburg Confession, with all the great doctrines of the Reformation." The five errors were: (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the Mass, (2) private confession and absolution, (3) denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath, (4) baptismal regeneration, and (5) the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Eucharist.

¹⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1851, 34.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1851, 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1855, 32.

¹³ Vergilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology* (N. Y., 1927, 409 pp.), chapter V, The "Definite Synodical Platform," carefully documented. The formal title was: *Definite Platform Doctrinal and Disciplinary, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod*. Phila.: Miller and Burlock, 1855; second edition, 1856. The author's name was not stated. Professor Samuel S. Schmucker afterward acknowledged authorship.

The *Definite Platform* was sent to the pastors of the General Synod and the synods were urged to adopt it as their confessional basis. But the synods had gone farther than Professor Schmucker and all but a few of the small synods rejected his *Platform*.

When the *Definite Platform* got around to the New York Ministerium the latter knew its mind and expressed itself in unmistakable terms. It was now definitely in the ranks of the conservative Lutherans and it instructed its "delegates to the General Synod to vote against the adoption and sanction of the so-called Definite Synodical Platform, as the doctrinal basis of the General Synod."¹⁴

The following year (1857) there came to the Ministerium the report of its First Conference District, embracing the congregations of New York City and vicinity. On the doctrinal side, the Conference had been discussing its "relation to the Augsburg Confession and the Symbolical Books."¹⁵ Thus the question of all the particular confessions of the Lutheran Church came squarely before the Ministerium, not only the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms, but also the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord.¹⁶

That however was going too fast for the Ministerium as a whole. There was "a long and animated discussion," for "many of the brethren" regarded this "as the entering wedge for a change of the very principles upon which our Ministerium was founded." The matter was taken up again the following day and "after a full and earnest discussion" the report was tabled by a vote of 31 to 20.¹⁷

The setback was purely temporary. There was no stopping the movement. The next year it was decided to have one of the members "read at some time during our next annual session a history of the Augsburg Confession." Carl F. E. Stohlmann, pastor of New York City and leading advocate of the conservative Lutheran movement in the Ministerium, was chosen to "prepare and read" the paper.¹⁸

At the same time it was resolved "at the next meeting of the Ministerium, provided two-thirds of the members agree," to amend its con-

¹⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 33-34.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1857, 19.

¹⁶ Henry E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord* (Phila., 1893, 2 vols.), 2:36-63.

¹⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1857, 21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1858, 25.

THE THREE SYNODS

stitution because "the doctrinal basis is not sufficiently definite." The new doctrinal statement was to read:

That we establish it as a fundamental rule of our Ministerium, that the person to be ordained or licensed, be required to receive, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers, the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Smaller Catechism, as a satisfactory exhibit of the doctrines of our holy religion, as taught in the Word of God.¹⁹

The following year (1859) was a mountain peak in the history of the Ministerium. First, the reading of the history of the Augsburg Confession took place not just "at some time during the session," but became the subject of the synodical sermon by President Pohlman. The discourse was described as "a most admirable production and very befitting the occasion; and from the eloquent manner in which it was delivered, it left a deep impression upon all who heard it." In fact it was considered so good that it was ordered published, an action over a sermon not taken for years.²⁰

Then followed action upon the constitutional amendment proposed the previous year. But now the proposed amendment did not go far enough, and "after a warm and animated discussion," a substitute was proposed reading as follows:

That we establish it as a fundamental rule of our Ministerium, that the person to be ordained or licensed, be required to receive, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers, the Word of God, as contained in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and the Augsburg Confession, as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word, and of the faith of our Church founded upon that Word.²¹

The most amazing thing, however, was yet to come. After "some interesting and able remarks," the substitute amendment was voted upon, and the result must have surprised even the conservatives. It was carried unanimously!²²

LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Reconciliation of Ministerium and Hartwick Synod

The bitterness stirred up between the Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod over the separation in 1830 dissolved rapidly in the Ministerium.

¹⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1858, 30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1859, 4, 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1859, 23.

²² *Ibid.*, A brief account of this development is in John Nicum's *The Doctrinal Development of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York*,

The following year it was decided by unanimous vote to send a delegate to Hartwick Synod²³ and when another pastor and congregation wanted to leave for the new synod the Ministerium regularly dismissed them with its "best wishes."²⁴

It took the Hartwick Synod members a little longer to cool off. At their meeting in 1832 they were still rankling under the unfortunate Smith case,²⁵ but they took enough time out to say that they "cordially reciprocate the friendly regards" of the Ministerium.²⁶ The following year (1833) they in turn sent a delegate to the Ministerium.²⁷ The exchange of delegates continued regularly thereafter.

In 1833 the Ministerium's missionary and education committee reported that it was "anxious to elicit the co-operation of our brethren of the Hartwick Synod" in the "vast and extensive" home mission field. "If this can be effected," the committee added, "we have little doubt but that the happiest effects must result."²⁸ Apparently this did not get beyond the committee's hope, for nothing further was heard of it in either synod.

In 1836 however the Ministerium took the initiative to re-establish "a more hearty co-operation in promoting the great interest of the church."²⁹ A cordial letter was written to the Hartwick Synod telling of the Ministerium's desire to work with them and suggesting a joint committee to iron out the details:

We feel no desire to review the past to ascertain to whom the blame should properly be attached; our duty is with the present and future. We earnestly pray that the Spirit of wisdom may aid us in the settlement of these important concerns. The most suitable way of reaching this object has appeared to be the appointment of a judiciary committee from each body. We pray that this proposition may meet your hearty concurrence.³⁰

Relations thereafter between the two synods continued with increasing cordiality. In 1845, when the Ministerium celebrated its "50th meeting,"

(1887), 16-19. (Reprint of the article in *Lutheran Church Review*, vol. VI:68ff, 140ff.)

²³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1832, 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1832, 8.

²⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1832, 22-24. The Smith case is detailed above, p. 81.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1832, 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1833, 15.

²⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1833, 26.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1836, 17.

³⁰ Letter of Pastors Strobel, Pohlman, and Geissenhainer, Jr., to the Hartwick Synod, dated New York, Sept. 21, 1836, in the archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England among Papers of Hartwick Synod.

eight Hartwick pastors were present.³¹ The following year President Pohlman of the Ministerium spoke most cordially about the Hartwick Synod as "our sister Synod."³² A committee of the Hartwick Synod the following year returned the compliment in kind by praising "the fraternal feeling and readiness to co-operate prevailing between our two Synods."³³

There was even talk several years later in 1853 of a reunion of the two synods. The idea was proposed by no less a person than Philip F. Mayer, distinguished pastor of St. John's Church in Philadelphia, and a lifelong member of the New York Ministerium.

At the meeting of the Ministerium that year in Rhinebeck nine Hartwick Synod pastors were present. Greeting the Hartwick Synod men heartily, Mayer "dwelt with pleasure and earnestness upon the sameness of our views, and of the co-operation of both Synods in the various causes of benevolence." In closing his remarks he "suggested that the synods thus closely united might form a still closer bond, by a more positive and efficient reunion."³⁴

President Senderling of the Hartwick Synod responded graciously, remarking that "if it were the will of God that such a union should be brought about, he would say amen." However, while he acknowledged that "in sentiments and in the cause of general benevolence they were one," there nevertheless was a new problem about a reunion. The Ministerium had been growing rapidly, with forty-nine ordained pastors and five licentiates on its roll, and the Hartwick Synod was growing too, with twenty-two ordained pastors and two licentiates on its roll.³⁵ A reunion "was questionable" Senderling continued, because "the difficulty would naturally arise in finding places large enough to accommodate all that would attend each annual session." We wonder what would have been said if someone had prophesied that a hundred years later there would be more than 400 pastors and lay delegates to house.

Recognition of Franckean Synod Grudgingly Given

All that has been said about the cordial relations between the Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod was certainly not true of the relations of those two bodies with the Franckean Synod.

³¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1845, 7.

³² *Ibid.*, 1846, 22.

³³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1847, 11.

³⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1853, 19; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1853, 17.

³⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1853, 5-6; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1853, 3-4.

The Ministerium almost completely ignored the Franckean Synod for nearly twenty years. When for example the Ministerium was celebrating its "50th meeting" in 1845, President Pohlman, a kindly, distinguished leader, commented that "fifty years ago, like Jacob when he passed his staff over Jordan, we were comparatively alone; and lo, now we have become two bands."³⁶ Only two, not three bands. The Franckean Synod was outside the pale.

When the committee on the minutes of other synods reported in 1845, for another example, it gave a "general statistical review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States" listing twenty synods, but the Franckean Synod was conspicuously not listed.³⁷ This was probably the routine procedure with respect to the Franckean Synod. Eleven years later in 1856 the Ministerium's committee reported on the minutes of fifteen "sister synods," but did not include the Franckean Synod, and that at a time when Nicholas Van Alstine was present as a visitor from that synod.³⁸

It was only in 1854 that a visitor from the Franckean Synod was present at a Ministerium meeting and invited by that body to the normal courtesy of recognition as an "advisory member."³⁹ Two years later Van Alstine was present, as mentioned above, and quite amazingly his name was listed at the head of the group of delegates and visitors who were "admitted to seats as advisory members."⁴⁰ And just as amazingly he was invited to have the opening prayer at the foreign and home missionary meeting on the evening devoted by the Ministerium to missions.⁴¹

At no time during this period however were official delegates exchanged between the Ministerium and the Franckean Synod. Also there appears to be no record that the Ministerium ever had one of its members attend the Franckean Synod as a visitor.

The Hartwick Synod was not much more charitable toward the Franckean Synod. Of course there was considerable bitterness because each had congregations on the same territory. In particular, there was the Sharon parish, whose case was long in the courts, as related above,

³⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1845, 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1845, 20. The General Synod however listed both the Franckean and the Tennessee Synods, to give a true "General Statistical Review." *Minutes, General Synod*, 1845, 81.

³⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 21-24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1854, 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1856, 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1856, 20.

and was not settled until 1845.⁴² Even though the Hartwick Synod came out on top in that struggle, the case had gone on so long that the rancor was not easy to get rid of.

There appeared numerous ways by which the Franckean Synod was slighted. For example Isaac Kimball, a Franckean pastor, was called to a Hartwick Synod congregation and was regularly dismissed by the Franckean Synod to the Hartwick Synod. But a special committee had to be appointed for his case and even though the committee reported on his excellent character and qualifications two years elapsed before the Synod accepted him.⁴³

On another occasion a pastor regularly dismissed by the Franckean Synod, Lambert Swackhamer, had his application referred to the ministerial session of the synod, while at the same time a pastor from the New York Ministerium was promptly admitted into full membership. Swackhamer had to go through a "colloquium" and "after something of a protracted, yet a very frank and friendly conversation" he was admitted.⁴⁴

It was not until 1851, fourteen years after the split, that a pastor from the Franckean Synod was present at a Hartwick Synod meeting and accepted as an "advisory member."⁴⁵ Franckean members were regularly present at the Hartwick Synod thereafter. But there is no record of any exchange of official delegates.

The *Definite Platform* episode was the means of another unfortunate disagreement between the Hartwick and Franckean Synods.

The Hartwick Synod took no formal action on the *Platform*. But at its meeting in 1856 it adopted "after a full and frank discussion" a document made up by one of its newly received pastors, Philip A. Strobel, titled "A Doctrinal Position of the Hartwick Synod."⁴⁶

The Hartwick Synod intended it to be merely a restatement of its former doctrinal position. But in elaborating upon what it rejected and what it held to, the list looked suspiciously like the five errors in the *Definite Platform*, particularly " . . . rejects the doctrine of baptismal regeneration," and "maintains the sacred obligation of the Lord's Day, as of divine appointment."

⁴² Above, p. 104.

⁴³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 6; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1847, 17, 26; 1848, 7, 11, 19-20; 1849, 20.

⁴⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1850, 5, 8, 11, 30.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1851, 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1856, 19. The document is given in full on pp. 30-31.

The Franckians immediately recognized how such statements fitted right into their own doctrinal views. Then their synodical secretary, Nicholas Van Alstine, injudiciously published an article about it in the *Lutheran Observer*. He stated forthrightly that "the Franckian Synod looks with favor upon the new platform" adopted by the Hartwick Synod in 1856 and that "if this step had been taken in 1837 the necessity for a division might have been measurably obviated."⁴⁷

This the Hartwick Synod members did not like at all and they declared in unmistakable terms "that this Synod did not at its meeting in Schoharie [in 1856] adopt a *new* platform, but merely 'reaffirmed its adherence to the doctrinal basis of the General Synod,' and to its own exposition of the Augsburg Confession, as contained in a pamphlet published by this body in 1837."⁴⁸

It was not until 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, that the three synods were at last forced into a joint venture on the basis of equality. Hartwick Seminary's student body had been increasing steadily and the alumni held a meeting to initiate a plan to raise \$10,000 for the endowment of another professorship. The representatives of the three synods were present and they were requested to present the matter to their respective bodies. The attitude of the Ministerium showed a happy change, as it resolved

That a committee of five be appointed by this Ministerium, who shall, as soon as possible, secure the services of a suitable man to canvass the Lutheran Churches in connection with this Ministerium, and with the Hartwick and Franckian Synods, for the purpose of raising ten thousand dollars, or more.⁴⁹

*Synodical Development*⁵⁰

Some of the customs and practices common in our synodical meetings today became well established in the period just before the Civil War. Others began to emerge and develop with some distinctness. Some customs on the contrary suited the conditions of those times perfectly, but did not survive.

The custom begun by the Ministerium of meeting over the week-end to enable its members to be together on Sunday was continued without

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1857, 27, quoting from the *Lutheran Observer* of July 10, 1857.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1857, 27.

⁴⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 24.

⁵⁰ This section is based upon the minutes of the three synods for 1830-1860.

change in that body. It became the established practice also in the Hartwick and Franckean Synods from their earliest meetings.

The annual meetings were held in various cities or towns upon invitation of the host congregation and took from three to five days. The Ministerium started Saturday afternoon or evening and continued until the following Tuesday or Wednesday. The Hartwick Synod started Saturday morning or afternoon and continued also until Tuesday or Wednesday. The Franckean Synod started Thursday morning and continued until Monday.

Upon arriving, the members of the synod reported at the host church or at the parsonage and were taken or directed to the homes where they were to lodge.

The Ministerium opened with the service preparatory to the Lord's Supper, usually on Saturday evening. The Hartwick Synod, assembling early on Saturday, got in a session or two for business before the preparatory service. It opened the first session with a service of Scripture, a hymn, and prayer by the president. The Franckean Synod, starting on Thursday, got most of its business completed before Saturday night. It opened its first session in the same way as did the Hartwick Synod.

The Hartwick Synod devoted Saturday evening to a preparatory service, the same as the Ministerium. The Franckean Synod mentioned nothing in its minutes prior to 1856 about devoting their Saturday evening to a preparatory service. The minutes state simply that the congregation with the members of the synod assembled and had a preaching service, which was then followed by a business session. It was not until 1856 that it was specifically stated that "at the appointed hour for divine worship" one of the pastors "preached a sermon preparatory to the Lord's Supper."

Both the preparatory service on Saturday and the communion service on Sunday were for the members of the host congregation as well as for members of the synod. The sacrament, from numerous references, was administered first to the members of synod, clerical and lay, then to the members of the host congregation.

The term "synodical discourse" or occasionally "synodical sermon," preached by the president, came into use in this period. In the Ministerium and Hartwick Synod it was preached almost always at the communion service on Sunday. In the Franckean Synod it was preached at the opening session on Thursday; but occasionally at the Sunday com-

munion service. The theme of the synodical sermon was sometimes fixed by vote of synod, sometimes it was devoted to special causes such as missions. It was always based upon a scriptural text.

The first business session of the Ministerium was always opened with the singing of a hymn and a prayer by the president. The Hartwick and Franckean Synods, as already mentioned, had also a Scripture reading. All succeeding sessions were opened and closed with prayer. The Franckean Synod in addition devoted the first part of most afternoon sessions to "divine service" with a sermon.

The hours of synod ran usually from 9 to 12:30 or 1, and again from 2 or 3 until adjournment, probably about 5 o'clock, to allow time for the evening meal. The evening meeting began anywhere from 6:30 to 8.

The day sessions were devoted to business, with many reports and much speaking. The evenings were given over usually to a preaching service or to the cause of missions, occasionally to the cause of Sunday schools, or to the ordination service, in both the Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod. The Franckean Synod having a preaching service in the afternoon, devoted evenings sometimes to synodical business, sometimes to still another preaching service, or occasionally to the cause of missions, Sunday schools, or a subject of moral reform. The Franckean put much emphasis upon the afternoon preaching service. The list of sermon subjects for a typical annual meeting embraced Church Government, American Slavery, Moral Reform, the Christian Sabbath, Christian Union, and the Reformation.

Typical Synodical Meetings

To get a more complete picture of synodical meetings in the period just before the Civil War, here is what went on in the three synods in 1858, a normal year:⁶¹

New York Ministerium

This was the "63rd Synod," held from Saturday, September 25, to Wednesday, September 29, in St. Matthew's Church, New York City, Pastor Carl F. E. Stohlmann.

Saturday 7:30 P.M. Preparatory service with sermon in English. Then "the usual liturgical services were read in German."

⁶¹ Minutes of the three synods for 1858.

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Sunday 10:30 A.M. A large congregation was present for worship. President Pohlman "delivered the annual synodical sermon." At 3:30 P.M., a preaching service with sermon in German. At 7 P.M., a sermon followed by the Lord's Supper for "the ministers, lay delegates, and communicant members of the church."

Monday 9 A.M. First synodical session. Opened by President Pohlman with Psalm 46, a hymn, and prayer. The roll call showed present 32 out of 55 pastors, 4 licentiates, 23 lay delegates, and 3 commissioners;⁵² also 2 delegates "from sister synods" and 18 visitors or "advisory members." Applications of pastors, licentiates and congregations for admission into the Ministerium were considered and voted on. Triennial election of officers resulted in the re-election of the present officers. Minutes of the previous year were referred to a committee to be reported on later.

A number of communications were received, including an invitation which was accepted to visit the annual fair of the American Institute. The president read his annual report; its length was the usual, about six pages printed, devoted almost entirely to his official acts connected with pastors and congregations. Minutes of "different sister synods" were presented and referred to a committee for report later. The treasurer read his annual report which was referred to an auditing committee.

Parochial reports were then presented by the pastors, with written "miscellaneous remarks" attached concerning particular events or problems in the parish. The reports, showing 55 congregations with 11,016 communicant members, were placed in the minutes in "Tabular View," after which were printed the "miscellaneous remarks." The contributions from each congregation were then handed in to the treasurer: for Synodical Fund \$146, Foreign Missions \$524, Domestic Missions \$252, Education \$123, Widow's Fund \$90, Total \$1,135. Adjourned with prayer.

Monday 3 P.M. The second synodical session was opened with prayer. Minutes of morning session were read and approved. Memorial on Philip F. Mayer, pastor of St. John's Church, Philadelphia, was presented. Committee on unfinished business reported two items. The "committee on secret associations" was discharged. Report of Hartwick Seminary was read and discussed. Adjourned with prayer.

Monday 5 P.M. The first ministerial session was opened with prayer.

⁵² A commissioner was a lay delegate from a congregation without a pastor.

Applications were presented from nine men for ordination, licensure and admission by transfer.

Monday 7:30 P.M. Foreign and Home Missionary meeting. Opened with hymn and prayer. There were four addresses, two in German, two in English. Closed with prayer and benediction.

Tuesday 9 A.M. Third synodical session was opened with prayer. Roll call. Minutes were read and approved. Standing committees for the ensuing three years were announced: examining committee and executive committee on home missions. Invitation received and accepted to visit the public institutions of the city. Auditing Committee reported, showing balance in Synod's treasury of \$28.92. Committee on "minutes of sister synods" reported on minutes of ten synods. Excuses of absentees were acted upon. Adjourned with prayer.

Tuesday 3 P.M. Second ministerial session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Discussion and decision on applications for ordinations and licensure. Adjourned with prayer.

Tuesday 4 P.M. Fourth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Regret that St. John's Church, Philadelphia, is separating from the Ministerium. Reports of delegates from Pennsylvania Ministerium and Hartwick Synod.

Tuesday 7:30 P.M. Service of ordination and licensure. "After the usual preliminary exercises" the sermon was preached in English followed by the "liturgical services." The "usual constitutional questions" were asked in German and English. Five men were ordained and two were licensed. Service closed with benediction by the president.

Wednesday 9 A.M. Fifth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Report of special committee on future annual meetings of the Ministerium was read, discussed and adopted. Pastor Stohlmann was appointed to prepare and read a paper on the history of the Augsburg Confession at the 1859 meeting. New German congregation was received. The president's report was discussed and action taken on a number of items. New missionary station was urged as needed in China; it was commended to the attention of the General Synod's Foreign Missionary Society. Time and place of next meeting was decided upon. Delegates were appointed to Pennsylvania Ministerium and Hartwick Synod; also to General Synod. Need for a Lutheran church in Brooklyn was referred to executive committee of home missions.

Wednesday 3 P.M. Sixth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and

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adopted. Minutes to be printed, 500 copies in English and 500 in German. Amendment to constitution concerning doctrinal change was proposed. Long discussion over it. Adjourned with singing the "Christian Farewell," prayer and benediction.

Wednesday 4:30 P.M. Third ministerial session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Several general items were cared for. Adjourned with prayer.

Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Closing preaching service in German.

Thursday 9 A.M. Tour to Randall's Island viewing the charitable institutions and prisons there. Closed with an "informal meeting of the Ministerium," with short addresses in German and English.

Hartwick Synod

This was the 28th convention, held Saturday, October 9, to Wednesday, October 13, in St. Paul's Church, Johnstown, New York. Jacob Z. Senderling, pastor.

Saturday 2 P.M. First synodical session. Opened with "devotional exercises conducted by the secretary." Roll call showed present 24 pastors, 14 lay delegates and 6 commissioners; also 1 delegate and 2 advisory members. Other visitors were greeted upon arrival and given status of advisory members. The president read his report containing ten items of official acts relating to pastors and congregations. Adjourned with prayer.

Saturday afternoon. Preparatory service with sermon. Similar to that of the New York Ministerium.

Saturday evening. Preaching service.

Sunday morning: "Introductory service" followed by the president's "synodical sermon," which was "full of unction and produced a deep impression." Lord's Supper administered to "the clerical and lay members of Synod and to a very large number of other communicants." One of the pastors preached in the Presbyterian church. Sunday afternoon: preaching service in the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches. Several pastors "addressed Sabbath Schools in the vicinity of the village." Sunday evening: service, with sermon on "Family Worship." One of the pastors preached at the Court House for the Methodist congregation.

Monday 9 A.M. Second synodical session. Prayer by the president. Minutes read and approved. A licentiate was received from another synod. Election of officers. Minutes of previous year were referred to committee.

Correspondence and minutes from other synods referred to five committees. The reorganized "United Lutheran Church" at Richmondville was received into Synod. Parochial reports were handed in with written "remarks" attached. The reports showed 37 congregations, with the number of communicant members not listed; they were published in the minutes in tabular form and the "remarks" printed in full, covering 9½ printed pages. Adjourned with prayer.

Monday 2 P.M. Third synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. A pastor was received from another synod. Congregation in Williamsburg, Canada, received into Synod. Committee on minutes of previous year reported on items needing attention. German churches of Canajoharie and environs wanted to withdraw; committee appointed to advise them. Contributions were handed in: for Synodical Fund \$38, Foreign Missions \$234, Domestic Missions and Education \$516; Total \$828. German congregation at Hornellsville admitted. Address given by agent of American and Foreign Christian Union. The Union was commended by Synod. Report of committee on home missions and education was read. A lay delegate was given permission to leave after the present session. Adjournment with prayer.

Monday afternoon. First ministerial session. Prayer. Reading of previous year's minutes dispensed with. Application of licentiate for ordination referred to committee for a "colloquium." Another licentiate, not present, was to be warned he could perform no further ministerial acts. Adjourned with prayer.

Monday 7 P.M. Missionary and Education meeting, well attended, opened with prayer. Three addresses were given, on Foreign Missions, Domestic Missions, and Beneficiary Education. Closed with appeal for offering for domestic missions and education. Offering, \$20. "The exercises were enlivened with some excellent music by the choir." 194 persons then pledged from \$1 to \$10 each for domestic missions and education, which with the offering totaled \$214. Dismissed with the benediction.

Tuesday 9 A.M. Fourth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Auditing committee reported showing balance of \$9.07 in synodical treasury and \$11.05 in missionary and education treasury. Treasurer's report of about 40 printed lines. One item under disbursements was "one counterfeit bill, \$1.00." Memorial on the death of Pastor Swackhamer. Minutes of eleven sister synods reported on by three com-

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mittees. Resolution adopted that a congregation in a parish cannot separate itself from the parish without sanction of the Synod.

Resolution adopted to organize a synodical missionary and education society. Pastor W. J. Cutter was excused for nonattendance. Report of missionary and education committee was discussed and adopted. Committee had overdrawn its account by \$168 and needed an additional \$300 to aid three ministerial students at Hartwick Seminary for the coming year. Sermon of Pastor E. Belfour on "Family Worship," preached on Sunday evening, to be published. Resolution adopted that "the power to admit or to dismiss church members is vested in the church council." New "blank Parochial Reports" were to be printed and distributed to the pastors. Adjourned with prayer.

Tuesday 2 P.M. Second ministerial session. Prayer. Licentiate appeared for colloquium of "about one hour"; it was satisfactory and he was to be ordained. Adjourned "to engage in worship." The ordination service followed with large congregation present. Act of ordaining was "by the officers of Synod, aided by Dr. Lintner who preached the sermon" and Pastor Senderling of the host church.

Tuesday afternoon. Fifth synodical session, after the ordination service. Minutes read and approved. Delegate to the New York Ministerium reported.

Tuesday evening. Sixth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Proposal to organize a synodical home mission and education society unanimously approved. Constitution adopted and officers elected. Congregation at West Amsterdam given permission to have a committee visit the churches of Synod to solicit funds for the balance due on its building. Resolution of gratitude to God for the growing mission in India. Resolution to commend to the Foreign Mission Society of the General Synod the establishment of a mission in China. Adjourned with prayer.

Wednesday 9 A.M. Seventh synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Thanks to the host congregation. Committee of three appointed "to visit Hartwick Seminary" on behalf of Synod. Committee on church music reported. Resolution adopted "with great unanimity" for the Lutheran Church of New York State to establish "one or more female seminaries of high grade." Committee appointed to get details and report at next meeting. Report of Hartwick Seminary presented. President's report discussed and adopted. The problem of vacant congre-

gations was taken up and solutions found, at least temporarily. Adjourned with prayer.

Wednesday 1:30 P.M. Eighth synodical session. Prayer. Minutes read and approved. Election of delegates to General Synod. Delegate and alternate elected to New York Ministerium. Election, from four invitations, of place to meet next year. Synod divided into four "conference districts." One thousand copies of the minutes to be printed. Closed with prayer, the hymn "The Christian Farewell" and benediction.

Franckean Synod

This was the 21st annual session, held Thursday, June 3 to Monday, June 7 in the Lutheran Church at Poestenkill, Rensselaer County.

Thursday morning. (The Franckean Synod did not number its sessions; it used the term "session" for the entire meeting.) "Called to order and the introductory exercises were conducted by the president and secretary." Roll call showed present 12 out of 17 pastors, 5 licentiates, and 10 lay delegates. Synodical sermon was preached by the president "to a large and appreciative audience." Resolution adopted that "after today, Synod meet at 8 A.M., spend the first hour in devotional exercises and adjourn at 1 P.M. Meet again at 3 for divine service and business." Adjourned with prayer.

Thursday 3 P.M. Prayer. The president read his report, which was referred to "appropriate committees." This was a brief report of two printed pages, on removals and locations, destitute churches, revivals, and miscellaneous. Minutes from "different synods" were presented and referred to committee on synods. "A season of much interest was enjoyed in listening to parochial reports and remarks in regard to the state of the churches." The reports were referred to the committee on the state of religion. The reports were printed in tabulated form in the minutes, showing 26 congregations, two of them in Wisconsin, with the "whole number of members" as 2,508.

Three resolutions were adopted of thanksgiving to God "for the gracious outpourings of His Spirit upon our churches during the last synodical year." Business was suspended to unite in prayer. The standing committees were announced: State of Religion, Unfinished Business, Finance, Synods, Petitions, Hartwick Seminary, and Examination. The select committees were announced: Anti-Slavery, Temperance, Christian Union,

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Sabbath School, Peace. Appointments for preaching during the session were announced. Adjourned with prayer.

Thursday evening. Preaching service attended by "a goodly number of the members of Synod and of the community."

Friday 9 A.M. After a period of devotional exercises, the business meeting was begun. Prayer. Roll call. Minutes read and approved. Several pastors who had written in were excused for nonattendance. Petitions were presented and referred to the committee on petitions. Pastors from the Hartwick Synod were introduced whenever they arrived. Report on Hartwick Seminary was presented. "Elaborate and extended report on Temperance" was made. Report on the state of religion was presented, with the "remarks" which the pastors had added to their parochial reports. Report on peace presented; it was particularly against the war with Mexico; "after sundry emendation" it was adopted. Adjourned with prayer.

Friday 3 P.M. Preaching service. Ministerium meeting followed, but its decisions were not recorded.

Friday evening. Preaching service with "an interesting audience" present.

Saturday 9 A.M. Business session "at expiration of the hour of prayer." Prayer. Roll call. Minutes read and approved. Report on unfinished business. Pastor Levi Wheelock "having met the requisitions made upon him" was restored to membership. Report of committee on Christian union presented. Report of committee on petitions presented; items: Pastor's Fund, Church Extension Society, and several general items. The congregation at Perch Lake having "adopted the Articles of Faith and Discipline of this Synod" was admitted. "A conversation ensued" upon several questions of church order, "which occupied the time until the hour of adjournment." Adjourned with prayer.

Saturday 3 P.M. Preaching service. Ministerium meeting was held. Two candidates for ordination were approved. Three licentiates had their licenses renewed.

Sunday morning: Sabbath service. Sermon by the secretary of Synod. "The choir sang a piece beautifully adapted to the occasion." The "solemn rite of ordination" of two candidates was followed by the administration of the Lord's Supper. "The services entire occupied about two hours and a half, and were concluded most appropriately by the choir singing the

Lord's Prayer, and the benediction by the secretary." Sunday 3 P.M. Preaching service with sermon in German. Sunday evening: Preaching service in the host church. Other pastors preached in the Free Will Baptist Church and in two Lutheran churches in near-by towns.

Monday 9 A.M. Business session "after the usual session of devotion." Prayer. Roll call. Applications of two Germans from Wisconsin for licensure were referred to the ministerium session. Report on Sabbath schools was presented. Report presented on the minutes of eight synods and the General Synod. Resolution of sympathy to Pastor Christian Sans, of Watertown, Wisconsin, member of the Synod, because the Board of Education of that city had opposed the reading of Scriptures and offering of prayer in the public schools. The treasurer's report was presented, and referred to finance committee. Report on anti-slavery presented. 600 copies of minutes to be printed and distributed. Elections held for missionary and education boards. Vote of thanks to host church. Committee on finance reported: balance in Synodical Fund \$50, in Missionary and Education Fund \$565. Annual election of officers. Election of place, from four invitations, for the next meeting. This concluded the synodical session. Prayer and benediction.

Monday 2 P.M. Ministerial meeting. Prayer. Several applications of pastors to be received into or dismissed from the Synod were approved. Applications of two German candidates for licensure were approved. Meeting of the Board of Education: voted \$80 each to two beneficiary students. Meeting of Missionary Board: voted \$50 to the church at Rush, New York. Adjourned.

Synodical Officers

The officers in the three synods continued to be president, secretary and treasurer.

In the Hartwick and Franckean Synods the officers were chosen annually. In the Ministerium the annual term had given way to a three-year term as early as 1816.⁵³

All the officers were regularly pastors prior to the Civil War with but a single exception. The exception occurred in 1850 when the Franckean Synod elected a layman, John C. Shuts, as treasurer. But he was

⁵³ In the Ministerium's constitution adopted that year. *Protocol, New York Ministerium*, 1816, 63; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1819, 5.

absent at the synodical meeting the following year so pastors were again chosen.⁵⁴

A proposal was made in the Ministerium in 1846 to amend its constitution so that "the treasurer be elected from among the lay members of the churches in connection with this Ministerium." But when the amendment came up for action the following year it "was rejected."⁵⁵

Prominent Synodical Leaders

*Henry N. Pohlman, Ministerium*⁵⁶

Henry Newman Pohlman (1800-1874) was a distinguished leader in New York synodical history throughout a ministry of fifty-two years.

Born in Albany of German ancestry, he was brought up in Ebenezer Church in that city under Pastor Philip G. Mayer. He studied at Hartwick Seminary and was its first graduate in 1820. Upon being licensed he went to the churches at Saddle River and Ramapo, New Jersey, and several years later at New Germantown, German Valley and Spruce Run, also in New Jersey. He served in New Jersey about 23 years.⁵⁷ He then became pastor of his home church in Albany and served it until his death.

He became an officer of the Ministerium in 1828 and held office most of the time thereafter. He was its treasurer from 1828 to 1833; its secretary from 1834 to 1836; its president from 1846 to 1848, and again from 1855 until 1866, when the Ministerium left the General Synod to join the General Council. Pohlman and other pastors wanted to remain in the General Synod, so in 1866 they withdrew from the Ministerium and organized the Synod of New York. He became the first president of the new body and remained in that office until his death.

Pohlman's biographer, William Strobel, sums up the outstanding characteristics of his life in these terse sentences:

1. His strong common sense. He seldom made a mistake of judgment.
2. His unswerving devotion to truth. There was not a shadow of exaggeration in his statements.
3. When he undertook any work, he did it with all his heart.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1850, 22; 1851, 8.

⁵⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1846, 13; 1847, 20.

⁵⁶ *Memorial of the Rev. Henry N. Pohlman, D.D.* [by William D. Strobel and others], Albany, N. Y., 1875, 61 pp.; and *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1821-1860.

⁵⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1821, 4; 1823, 4, 22; 1843, 4.

⁵⁸ *Memorial of the Rev. Henry N. Pohlman*, cited above, 38.

LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER

*Carl Stohlmann, Ministerium*⁵⁹

Carl Friedrich Eduard Stohlmann (1810-1868) was a notable personality in the Ministerium, especially as the leader of the confessional movement that eventually took the Ministerium out of the General Synod and into the more conservative General Council.

Born at Kleinbremen, near Bückeburg, Germany, he studied at the University of Halle under a new generation of Pietist professors such as Friedrich A. D. Tholuck.⁶⁰ In 1834 he arrived in New York City and went direct to Erie, Pennsylvania, to become pastor of a Lutheran congregation there, being ordained by the Pittsburgh Synod.

In 1838 upon the death of Frederick W. Geissenhainer, Sr., pastor for the German services of St. Matthew's Church in New York City, Stohlmann was called to take his place. He was a preacher of talents and power. His German congregation increased so rapidly that the English services were discontinued in 1840.

Stohlmann's influence in bringing the Ministerium to a greater appreciation of the historic Lutheran confessions was first felt in the conference to which he belonged, then in the whole Ministerium. His death after a few days' illness was a tragic loss to his congregation, especially in that it occurred on the day on which the new church building of St. Matthew's congregation was to be dedicated.

*Philip Engs, Layman, Ministerium*⁶¹

Typical of the best of the laymen in the synods in New York was Philip W. Engs, member of St. James Church, New York City, of which William D. Strobel was pastor.

Engs's activity in the Ministerium began in 1834 when he was a member of two committees, ministerial pensions and missionary and education. His pastor was chairman and secretary respectively of the two committees.

He appeared to prefer the ministerial pensions committee, and after 1836 that was his particular interest in the Ministerium.⁶² In 1840 he

⁵⁹ Biographical sketch by John Nicum, in his *Geschichte des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ministeriums vom Staate New York*, 174-179; and *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1838-1868.

⁶⁰ *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*, 515.

⁶¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834-1860; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1837-1861.

⁶² The Ministerium's pension fund is discussed below, p. 159.

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was on a committee to formulate a series of procedures for the fund, soon commonly known as the Widow's Fund. In 1844 he became secretary of the fund, and three years later the secretary-treasurer. That office he retained to the close of the present period.

Engs was active also in the General Synod and with but one exception was elected a lay delegate to every convention from 1837, when the Ministerium united with that body, to 1853.

In the General Synod he was regularly a vice-president of the Foreign Missionary Society. His interest in ministerial pensions led to his appointment in 1837 on the special committee to formulate a plan to get the General Synod's pension fund into operation.

When the fund still failed to get anywhere, Engs was again on a special committee in 1853 to find out what was wrong. The committee's new recommendation for five trustees, two clerical and three lay, was adopted, and he was elected one of the trustees. His fellow-trustees then chose him as treasurer, and he discovered that the fund apparently had not been well managed, for when "application for aid had come in from those entitled to it," he found that there were "at the time *no funds*."⁶³ He served only one term as trustee and treasurer.

*George Lintner, Hartwick Synod*⁶⁴

George Ames Lintner has already been mentioned when he was elected the first president of the Hartwick Synod.⁶⁵ Throughout this period he remained the outstanding leader in that synod, serving six annual terms as its president. But his influence went beyond the Synod soon after he became its president the first time. In 1833 he was elected secretary of the General Synod and in 1841 its president.

His interest in both home and foreign missions was a passion with him. While pastor at Schoharie he organized three congregations in his district, at Middleburg, Breakabeen and Central Bridge. His own congregation at Schoharie supported all of them until they were able to sustain themselves. In foreign work, it was under his pastorate that Walter

⁶³ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1855, 20. He wrote a summary of the history of the Fund from 1837 to 1853, in *Ibid.*, 1853, 23-27.

⁶⁴ Edmund Belfour, *Historical Sketch of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Schoharie, New York*, 1896, 31-34; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod* and *Minutes, General Synod*, 1830-1860.

⁶⁵ Above, p. 80.

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Gunn, a member of the Schoharie church, became the first foreign missionary from New York.

In 1849 Lintner resigned his congregation at Schoharie to become the general agent of the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod, to work in New York State. In that work too he made a conspicuous success.

*Nicholas Van Alstine, Franckean Synod*⁶⁶

Nicholas Van Alstine (1814-1900) was undeniably the ablest leader in the Franckean Synod, not only in this period, but for years beyond. He was a brilliant man, with a solid education. At his examination before the Franckean Synod he was singled out among the candidates by having his examination extended to cover also Hebrew and Greek. He was licensed that year, 1837, and ordained the following year.

There was no part of the life of his synod that he was not active in. His more conspicuous work, certainly in this period, was in home missions and he was so far ahead of his colleagues that he stood rather alone in projecting a sound and stable policy of home mission activity.

Van Alstine held his first office in the Synod in 1842, and in the twenty years following served three years as secretary, nine as treasurer and one as president.

He was a man of considerable educational attainments and a forceful speaker. He had a vigorous style of writing, of which the following excerpt is typical:

In former days a zeal all flaming and a heart warm in love of God were not only deemed the chief requisite in the ministry to secure success, but they measurably supplanted the place of all scientific knowledge and a respectable acquaintance with biblical doctrines and the system of correct interpretation.

But we have arrived at that age of the world, when zeal, love, devotion, and deep-toned piety are equally as indispensable, neither can a sanctified education, a rigid training of the powers of mind, and a studious and diligent investigation of the various sciences be neglected without material damage and deleterious effects to the cause of Christ.⁶⁷

THE MINISTRY

Some of the familiar customs and practices of today relating to the ministry were already in regular operation before the Civil War.

⁶⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod, 1837-1860; 1901, 20-21 (obituary).*

⁶⁷ *Minutes, Franckean Synod, 1845, 9.*

Licensure

Licensure was a regular practice in the three synods. There were always more congregations than pastors to care for them. Licensing theological students, usually in their second or third year, not only helped to care for some of the smaller vacant congregations, but also enabled the synod to keep a closer supervision over the students.

The supervision of the licentiates appeared to have been exacting in each of the synods. It began with their first appearance before the examining committee. In the Ministerium formal education appeared to be stressed more than in the Hartwick and Franckean Synods. On at least one occasion the Ministerium's examination was recorded as a "theological colloquium conducted chiefly in Latin."⁶⁸

In addition the Ministerium continued to require its licentiates to present journals of their ministerial acts and sermons of their own composition for the inspection of the Ministerium. This requirement was carried over into every edition of the Ministerium's constitution.⁶⁹ The Hartwick Synod had a similar requirement which also became a part of its constitution.⁷⁰

The intellectual standards in the Hartwick Synod appeared to be just as high as in the Ministerium. Even that was not considered sufficient, for in 1856 the Hartwick Synod declared that "the standard of ministerial education should be greatly elevated."⁷¹ This was apparently taken seriously, for shortly afterward the examining committee purchased "three Hebrew Psalters and three Greek Testaments" for its use.⁷²

The Franckean Synod was no less exacting. One object in training its men for the ministry was to attain "a high standard of classical and theological education." But it put that object into second place, for "classical qualification should not be the essential support, but thorough, divine and experimental knowledge of the Scriptures."⁷³

⁶⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 22.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1845, 25; *The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York* of 1816, 2nd edition (N. Y., 1836), p. 14, and 3rd edition (Albany, 1856), p. 14.

⁷⁰ In the first constitution adopted. "Proceedings of a Convention . . . held in Schoharie, October, 1830," in *Lutheran Magazine*, Nov., 1830, 145-147; the constitution is in *Minutes, General Synod*, 1829, 33; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1850, 30; 1858, 49; *Constitution of the Hartwick Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of New York* (Albany, 1858), p. 8.

⁷¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 22.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1860, 38.

⁷³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 20-21.

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Even the classical languages were not neglected in the Franckean Synod. In one instance the examining committee reported that "they were highly gratified with his [the candidate's] acquirements in the Greek language, and also in Christian or Biblical and Pastoral Theology."⁷⁴

In the 1830's the licentiate's examination appears to have been held, certainly in the Ministerium, in a public session before the whole synod. A committee conducted the examination. Then "after the lay delegates and the candidate had retired, the clerical brethren constituted a session strictly ministerial" and voted on the candidate.⁷⁵

The license was for no longer than one year, or if issued in the interim between synod meetings, until the next annual meeting. It was renewable provided the licentiate lived up to what was expected of him. It was presented in various ways: sometimes immediately after the ministerial session had voted it;⁷⁶ sometimes at a general service;⁷⁷ later, at the same service at which other candidates were to be ordained. Several such services are given in the next section under "Ordination."⁷⁸ In the Franckean Synod, the license was in the early years presented at the Sunday morning service, but later it was presented at a synodical session.⁷⁹

In the 1850's the advisability of perpetuating the system of licensure was questioned in the General Synod. All the synods were then asked to express their views as to whether to abolish or alter the system.⁸⁰

When the question was submitted to the New York Ministerium in 1855, President William D. Strobel stated what was doubtless in the minds of most of the pastors, that "on strict biblical views of ordination, as expressed in our Protestant churches, there might perhaps be found something defective in our practice." Nevertheless he recognized the practical necessity for the system, so he was "very much indisposed to favor a change in the present circumstances of the church, when we have so little knowledge of the early history of many of our candidates and when something like a probation seems essential to complying with the injunction of the apostle to lay hands suddenly upon no man."⁸¹

The matter was given to a special committee which reported the fol-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1851, 20.

⁷⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1832, 13.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1831, 14.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1832, 14.

⁷⁸ Below, p. 151.

⁷⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1844, 17; 1857, 24; 1861, 25-26.

⁸⁰ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1855, 25-26.

⁸¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1855, 37.

lowing year that "there was a difficulty in harmonizing the committee on any specific plan," but the majority of the members felt that "they find no good reason for changing the practice already adopted by this Ministerium and by a greater portion of the Lutheran Church in the United States."⁸² The Ministerium adopted the report.

The Hartwick Synod, at least so far as its minutes show, apparently did not act on the matter. The Franckean Synod not being part of the General Synod would not have received the communication.

At any rate, at the next meeting of the General Synod in 1857, it was reported that fifteen of its twenty-three synods had responded and that all except three had decided against a change in the system.⁸³

Since copies of licenses are rare, here is one in full issued to Daniel A. Payne, Negro licentiate of the Franckean Synod:

To all to whom these presents shall come. Greeting.

Be it known that Daniel A. Payne, a member of the Lutheran Church, and late a Student of Divinity in the Theology Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, after due examination as to his experimental knowledge of religion and branches of theological and literary acquirements and other Scriptural qualifications, has this day, in pursuance to the power vested in me as President of the Franckean Synod of [the] Lu[theran] C[hurch], been received as a Licentiate of said Synod and is hereby fully licensed to preach the Gospel, to administer the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to perform all other ministerial duties. This License to remain in force until the next session of the aforesaid Synod to be held on the first Thursday in October next.

In witness whereof, I have hereto set my hand and seal, at West Sandlake, N. Y., this 31 of May 1837.

(Signed) John D. Lawyer, President⁸⁴

Ordination

Ordination was a logical step after the licentiate had completed his course of study at the seminary. His life, studies and ministerial work having been kept under the scrutiny of the synodical authorities, his further colloquium with the examining committee was likely not any more difficult than his first. Then he was approved by the "ministerium session" and ordained. In all three synods the approval of the "ministerium session" was final; it was not recommended to the whole synod for final action as at the present time.

⁸² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 18.

⁸³ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1857, 20-21.

⁸⁴ Handwritten copy in archives of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of Franckean Synod, 1837.

THE MINISTRY

The ordination service was a simple order. Here are descriptions of typical services in the three synods:

In the Ministerium in 1848 at a special evening service:

This evening the members of the Ministerium and a numerous congregation assembled in the church to witness the solemn ceremonies of licensure and ordination. After prayer by Rev. C. A. Smith, Dr. Strobel preached an appropriate sermon from the words, "Who went about doing good," Acts 10:38. After the sermon, the Rev. C. F. Schaeffer, in the name of the Ministerium, delivered a license to preach the gospel and administer the ordinances of God's house to Mr. Christian Louis Knapp.

The licentiates, William B. Askam and Charles H. Seibke, having approached the altar and answered affirmatively the constitutional questions propounded to them, the president, assisted by some of the other ordained ministers, proceeded to consecrate them to the holy office of the ministry by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" and prayer. They were then solemnly charged to take heed to the ministry they had received in the Lord, that they fulfill it.⁸⁵

In the Hartwick Synod in 1843 on a Wednesday morning, at which one of the candidates was Walter Gunn, first foreign missionary from New York:

The ministerium [session] having had a short colloquium with the licensed candidates, Rev. Messrs. Gunn, Moyer and Leffler, applicants for ordination, and having approved of them, these brethren were about to be solemnly set apart for the work of the sacred ministry. The ordination sermon was preached by Brother Senderling from Isaiah 45:8.

The candidates having answered in the affirmative the questions required by the constitution propounded by the President, were consecrated to the work of the holy ministry by the imposition of the hands by different brethren and cordially welcomed by them in the giving of the right hand of fellowship. The president commended to the special care of the Great Head of the church, the brethren who had just been fully inducted into the ministry of reconciliation.⁸⁶

In the Franckean Synod in 1847 at the Sunday morning communion service:

Brother Wieting preached a discourse from John 3:19-20. Immediately after the sermon, Brother D. Van Alstine, in compliance with a vote of the ministerium [session] was, upon assenting to the constitutional questions, duly set apart to the office of bishop by the imposition of hands and prayer; whereupon the officers of the Synod, and the bishops present successively gave him the right hand of fellowship, and welcomed him as a permanent co-worker with us. The Lord's Supper was then administered to the members of the Synod together with a very large number of Christians present, the ministers present alternately conducting the exercises.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1848, 20-21.

⁸⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1843, 25.

⁸⁷ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, June, 1847, 19-20.

Two Negroes Ordained

Two other ordinations of this period are of interest, because they are of the first Negroes to be ordained in New York.

The first took place in 1832, when President John Bachman of the South Carolina Synod, but previously a prominent member of the New York Ministerium, recommended that a Jehu Jones, Jr., be ordained by the Ministerium "with a view to his laboring as a missionary in the colony of Liberia, Africa."⁸⁸

The communication was intended for the meeting of the Ministerium in October of that year but it did not arrive until after adjournment. Several of the pastors however were still in New York City when the message arrived, and they took it upon themselves to "assemble together as a self-constituted body" in order to arrive at a "decisive and instant action."

Jones was accordingly ordained and the matter was reported the following year to the Ministerium, which decided that in the emergency "the brethren had done well, and their act was thus approved." But a curious addition was made, that inasmuch as "the Reverend Mr. Jones did not, although present, apply for admission into our clerical body, no formal resolution on the subject was deemed necessary." Jones never did become a member of the Ministerium. Nor did he ever affiliate with any other Lutheran synod as far as is known. Furthermore, it appeared that he had no intention of going to Africa, for shortly after his ordination he went to Philadelphia and organized a Negro congregation there, known as St. Paul's Church.⁸⁹

He made a dismal failure of the Philadelphia project because of his "inefficiency and general deportment," and in the estimation of the Ministerium he was deemed to have "forfeited whatever confidence the Church had reposed in his Christian character and integrity."

Jones himself however was not at all abashed by the failure, but brashly came back to the Ministerium with more than a full measure of boldness. That was in 1849, seventeen years after his ordination.⁹⁰ He presented a letter to the Ministerium signed "Jehu Jones, Lutheran

⁸⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1833, 6, 17. The story is incorporated in the present author's article: "Negro Lutheran Work in New York," from 1669 to 1942, in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, July, 1947, XX, No. 3, 261-273; and reprinted as a separate in 1948.

⁸⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1849, 19, 21.

Missionary," in which he stated that he planned to "establish a Lutheran congregation among the colored population in the city of New York" and calmly requested the Ministerium for aid.

The matter was referred to a special committee, of which Henry N. Pohlman was chairman. The committee brought back a scathing report about Jones's misdeeds and ended with a sharp denunciation that "from the period of his ordination to the present time, he has never been in connection with this or any other Lutheran ministerium; and as he represents himself to be a Lutheran missionary and under this designation has imposed himself upon the churches, making collections of money and appropriating them to his own personal use, we deem it our duty to warn the Christian public against his misrepresentations and impositions."

That conclusively ended any thought, certainly at the time, of doing any work among the Negroes in New York City. And nothing more was heard of Jones.

The second Negro ordination took place in the Franckean Synod, shortly after Jehu Jones had been ordained. An application came to the Synod from Daniel A. Payne, Negro student at Gettysburg Seminary, to be licensed. The application was favorably considered and Payne was licensed by President John Lawyer in May, 1837. Immediately after this he located in the city of Troy, New York, and "preached to the colored people in that place." Payne was ordained two years later but gave up the Troy work soon afterward and went to Philadelphia, but whether he did any work there is not known.⁹¹

Several years later (1842) Payne wrote to the Synod requesting a dismissal to the "Colored Methodist Church." The Synod however refused to grant the request "until he has discharged our claims and then he should be honorably dismissed."⁹² Nothing further was heard of him except that his address was changed to Washington, D.C., but it was reported that even without a formal dismissal he had connected himself with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A letter was directed to be sent to him inquiring about this and "requesting him to refund the amount due from him to this Synod" but apparently nothing came of it, and after 1846 his name was dropped from the clerical roll of the Synod.

⁹¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 27; 1839, 17; 1840, 32. See also above, p. 119.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1842, 24.

It was not until fifty years later, in 1894, that Payne was again heard of, when his death (in 1893) was mentioned at the meeting of the Synod. He had made good in the African Methodist Episcopal Church; in fact, said the report, "his qualifications induced this body to elect him as their bishop, and he was highly esteemed for his great usefulness until his recent decease." He had become a bishop in 1852 and later, in 1865, president of Wilberforce University.⁹³

The Call

The matter of the call of a pastor by a congregation was by no means clear. Only in the 1850's did some orderly procedures come into being and some control come to be generally exercised by the synods.

The synod had little control over either the pastor or the congregation when the pastor wanted to make a change or the congregation needed another pastor. The president of the synod was consulted, it appears, chiefly when the pastor or the congregation was no longer able to get anywhere by themselves.

Even when a change was made there were frequent omissions of the simple courtesy of informing the president of the synod about it. The Ministerium had to resort to a sharp resolution to call a halt to that omission, stating that "we highly disapprove of the practice of members of this Ministerium failing to give official notice of removals from place to place to the President."⁹⁴

Congregations were as lax as the pastors and it was the lament of presidents of synods that congregations selected pastors without any consultation with the synod's head.

If the procedure of seeking a new call or filling a vacant congregation as reported in a letter by a Ministerium pastor to President Crownse of the Hartwick Synod was practiced generally, one begins to understand the problem of the synodical presidents. The fact that he wrote so frankly seems to indicate that this was not a rare incident:

I resigned my charge at this place [Hartwick, New York] on last Sabbath week, because I could perceive no prospect of utility or success in the ministry in this settlement. I visited Canajoharie the day following, but I found it pre-occupied by a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church whom the people had agreed to support. I then went to Onondaga with the expectation of finding the

⁹³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1894, 14; Abdel R. Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 375.

⁹⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 11.

church vacant, and of spending the last Sabbath there, but I was disappointed. I waited on Mr. Jacob I. Joung, Deacon of the Lutheran Church, who informed me that they had employed a Methodist local preacher in the interim of the Synod, with the expectation that he would be received as a member at the next meeting. I was told that he was liked and his name is Deffendorf,⁹⁵ and with this information I made no delay, but returned to Syracuse on my way home.⁹⁶

The Ministerium tried to correct the practice by inserting a clause in the model constitution for congregations of 1852, that "when the pastoral office is vacant" the church council was "to nominate candidates for that office, after having asked the advice of the Ministerium."⁹⁷

The Hartwick Synod proceeded similarly. In its "Directions To Vacant Congregations" adopted in 1856, it put as item number 1:

It is desirable that no vacant congregation should proceed to the election of a pastor, without soliciting the counsel and advice of the president of the Synod.⁹⁸

There appeared to be none of these problems in the Franckean Synod. There were fewer pastors and congregations in that synod and there was no complaint about moving around.

Another complaint in the Ministerium had to do with pastors coming from another synod in or out of New York without bothering to secure a regular letter of transfer. The Ministerium insisted that that practice be stopped:

The reception of members from one synod into another without a proper dismission is a gross violation of Christian order, and that whenever a case may occur, the president of this body address an earnest expostulation and protest to the erring synod.⁹⁹

The Ministerium also insisted that a pastor taking a congregation belonging to the Ministerium "shall connect himself with the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of New York at its first meeting after his election." The instruction was placed in the Ministerium's model constitution for congregations of 1852.¹⁰⁰

Hartwick Synod coped with the problem in the same way in its "Directions For Vacant Congregations." It stated that when a congregation "choose a pastor who is not in connection with the synod to which they

⁹⁵ Benjamin Diefendorf, who was licensed by the Franckean Synod in 1837. *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 15-16.

⁹⁶ Letter of Pastor William L. Gibson to President Adam Crownse of the Hartwick Synod, dated Hartwick Seminary, May 14, 1836, in archives of United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, among Papers of Hartwick Synod.

⁹⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1852, 36.

⁹⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 28.

⁹⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1852, 36.

[the congregation] belong, they should require him to attach himself to the ecclesiastical body with which they are connected."¹⁰¹

Another complaint in the Ministerium had to do with congregations calling a pastor for only one year, a practice "becoming more and more prevalent." The Ministerium sharply denounced the practice as "injurious to individual congregations, degrading to the ministry, destructive of those delightful relations which have subsisted and ever ought to subsist between pastor and people, and hence highly prejudicial to the church at large." It recommended to them "at no time to give a call to a minister for a period less than five years."¹⁰²

This was followed nearly a decade later by a clause in the model constitution for congregations that a pastor "shall hold his holy office so long as he teaches and lives as an Evangelical Lutheran minister should do." Any severance of relations was a matter for the Ministerium, not the congregation, to decide: "his cause shall be brought by the elders of his church before the Ministerium."¹⁰³

Several years later a resolution of the Ministerium went still further, declaring that "it is inconsistent with the nature, the dignity and the usefulness of the Christian ministry, that any minister should receive or accept of a call to a congregation for any *specified* period of time; and that arrangements of this kind are hereby decidedly disapproved of and will not be recognized by this Ministerium."¹⁰⁴

In the same year that the Ministerium took this action, the Hartwick Synod gave considerable thought to the "serious inconveniences [which] have arisen in many of our churches in consequence of the irregularity which has prevailed in the election and calling of ministers to the pastoral office." It dealt with the problem by having a formal call drawn up and recommended the model call to all its congregations.¹⁰⁵

*Form of a call to
Ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*¹⁰⁶

To the Rev. _____

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

¹⁰¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 29.

¹⁰² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 12-13.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1852, 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1856, 20.

¹⁰⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 15.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1856, 29-30.

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Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of _____ is destitute of a pastor and the stated means of grace which God has appointed for the salvation of souls, and since said church is well satisfied of the piety, literary attainments, and ministerial qualifications of you, Rev. _____, and have chosen you for their pastor; wherefore we [the style and title of the church] do hereby solemnly and in the fear of God call you, the said Rev. _____, to be our pastor and spiritual teacher, to preach the word of God, administer the holy sacraments, maintain Christian discipline, and perform all the other duties of the Gospel ministry, according to the word of God and the rules and constitution of our Evangelical Lutheran Church.

To encourage you in the performance of the duties of the pastoral office, we promise you in the name of the church, all proper attention, love and obedience in the Lord; and to free you from worldly cares and avocations while you are laboring for our spiritual good, we [the style and title of the church] do furthermore promise and bind ourselves and successors in office, to pay you the sum of _____ dollars, annually in _____ installments, as long as you continue the regular pastor of our church [or for the term of _____ years] together with the parsonage [if there be one, and such other particulars as may be inserted in the call].

The Lord incline your heart to accept this call, and enable you to come and labor among us in the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel of Peace.

In testimony whereof, we have respectively subscribed our names and affixed the seal of the church, this _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord _____

Signed:

Trustees

Elders

Deacons

Since this is the first formal call to be recommended by a synodical body in New York, it is reproduced here in full to see how well it was devised when compared with the call of the present day.

Installation

There appear to have been few irregularities in the matter of the installation of pastors. In the Ministerium no additional action was taken beyond that of 1803 to have a neighboring pastor perform the act.¹⁰⁷

The Franckean Synod took action in 1856 upon the need for proper installation but it did not specify who should perform the act: "All the ministers of this Synod shall be hereafter properly installed, wherever it is practicable, and as soon as it may be convenient after the pastoral relation has been formed."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Above, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ *Minutes, Franckean Synod, 1856, 10.*

At least one pastor, who had recently arrived from Germany, told about having installed himself, in a curious letter which President Pohlman in 1848 incorporated in his report to the Ministerium:

The Rev. George J. Kempe has resigned his pastoral charge at Boston, and accepted a call from the German Lutheran congregation at Rochester. He preached his introductory there on the 23rd of July, and remarks: "I felt very sorry that circumstances would not allow me to call some of my brethren for the solemnity of my introduction; but I have reason to believe the Lord Jesus introduced me, and the Holy Ghost held the introduction sermon."¹⁰⁹

Oversight of the Ministry

All pastors became obligated to the oversight of the synod into which they were received.

The Franckean Synod went further and made it a constitutional requirement in 1847 that "the character of each minister belonging to this Synod shall be reviewed at each annual meeting of Synod, when all objections shall be stated; but if none are made, his character shall be pronounced acceptable by the presiding officer."¹¹⁰

This would appear to be carrying the Pietistic "holiness" idea to an extreme. It had good motives back of it but there was no telling what might result from it. It would appear that while the review of character was made by the pastors themselves, it was done not at their own "ministerium session" but before the whole synod. The item was usually phrased: "The ministerium [session] now engaged into the examination of ministerial character."¹¹¹

The first year after the adoption of the procedure the Franckean went all out on it, actually using three sessions for the purpose.¹¹² But not all appeared well at the following year's "review of ministerial character," for certain "complaints were urged against John D. Lawyer relating to views he had published on the doctrines of the resurrection and the general judgment."¹¹³ The serious part of this was that Lawyer was president of the Synod that year.

An "amicable attempt" was made to "arrive at an understanding" by a resolution requiring Lawyer "to submit an exposition of his views upon these subjects to the officers of the Synod within three months" and

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1848, 7.

¹¹⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 30-31.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1850, 12; 1851, 11; 1852, 13.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1848, 10-12.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1849, 5-6.

to let the officers work out a solution.¹¹⁴ But no explanation was forthcoming from Lawyer; he simply sent in his "withdrawal from the Synod." This the officers refused to accept, contending that "no one may dissolve his connection at pleasure who is not in good standing." His name was therefore "stricken from the register."¹¹⁵

Perhaps as a result of the Lawyer case, the Synod the next year (1850) appointed a committee "to investigate and report upon the meaning" of the constitutional item.¹¹⁶ But no report appears to have been made.

At any rate, the procedure continued and apparently to the complete satisfaction of the Synod. Nothing further of an untoward nature was stirred up and year after year the story was the same: "Proceeded to review ministerial character and all pronounced satisfactory."

Then, after the 1853 meeting the record of the procedure abruptly stopped. No reason was given. Perhaps it was continued as previously though with less emphasis. Or perhaps it had become a purely formal matter. It might appear to have been both from the entry at the "ministerium session" of the 1860 meeting: "The usual review of the standing of members received attention."¹¹⁷

The Hartwick Synod apparently would have nothing that looked like such a procedure. For two years, in 1854 and again in 1855, President Lintner urged the Synod to "spend one day in ministerial session in considering and discussing subjects connected with the pastoral office and church government."¹¹⁸ Certainly that was far short of discussing "ministerial character." But nothing came of it.

The Ministerium did eventually get around to something along the lines of what President Lintner wanted for the Hartwick Synod. In 1858 it was decided to hold a "colloquial meeting" on the Saturday morning of the first day of the annual meeting. Among the things to be taken up was the "recital of pastoral experiences."¹¹⁹

Ministerial Pensions

The New York Ministerium was the only synod that did anything about the care of its needy pastors and their widows. The long delay in

¹¹⁴ The resolution was not recorded in the minutes for 1848. The item is in the report of President Dox in 1849. *Ibid.*, 1849, 6.

¹¹⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1849, 21.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1850, 9.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1860, 16.

¹¹⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1854, 10; 1855, 9.

¹¹⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1858, 25.

its early years, previously mentioned,¹²⁰ eventually came to an end with the establishment in 1834 of a "Fund for the Assistance of Disabled Clergymen, and of the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Clergymen."¹²¹ It was soon commonly called the "Widow's Fund."

The provision for assisting pastors seems at first glance pitifully small. But for the first half of the nineteenth century, when the dollar value was considerably greater than now, it was a good beginning.

Whenever a clergyman shall have been disabled by sickness, or accident, or age, so that he can no longer discharge his duties, upon a satisfactory representation of his situation to the Committee, they shall allow him, during the period of his inability \$100 per annum for himself; \$50 for his wife; and \$12 for each child that he may have under 14 years of age. When a clergyman shall die, the committee, on application being made, shall relieve the wants of his family, by granting the widow, so long as she remains unmarried, \$75 per annum; and to each child under 14 years of age the sum of \$12.

The Fund was based upon two definite sources of income. The first was the "profits arising from the sale" of the new edition of the Ministerium's hymnal, published in 1834. The other was from contributing members, a \$5 "initiation fee," and a payment "at the annual meeting of the Ministerium of the sum of \$3."

A third source of income was hoped for. That was from the Streit legacy in Europe, the interest of which was paid to the Pennsylvania Ministerium for the benefit of the Lutheran congregations in America which were in existence in 1753 and which belonged to that Ministerium. Since some of these congregations later came into the New York Ministerium, the latter contended, naturally enough, that part of the legacy interest should come to itself.¹²²

The New York Ministerium had tried in vain to get a share of the legacy as early as 1822, but without success, and there seemed to be "no hope of receiving any in the time to come."¹²³

The matter was renewed in 1832 and the Pennsylvania Ministerium finally expressed its willingness to share the interest on the legacy with the New York Ministerium.¹²⁴ The amount of interest appeared to vary, but in 1834 it was "heard" to be \$1,000 for the year past, of which

¹²⁰ Above, p. 51.

¹²¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834, 14-16.

¹²² The complete story of the legacy is in the *Hallesche Nachrichten*, 1:549-551, note 7. Most of it is repeated in Nicum, *Geschichte des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ministeriums vom Staate New York*, 190-191.

¹²³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1822, 9-10; 1823, 10; 1824, 8.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1832, 8-9; 1833, 14; 1834, 26-27.

\$400 was to go to the New York Ministerium. But in the 1850's the New York Ministerium's annual share dropped to as low as \$33.¹²⁵

In 1836 the New York Ministerium decided that the interest on the legacy was to "be applied to the fund for the assistance of disabled clergymen, etc., provided no objection be made by those congregations which were in existence prior to the year 1753."¹²⁶ The congregations generously relinquished their claims.¹²⁷ All the money thus received went into a capital fund, and the income from it was used for the benefit of the pastors, their widows and children.

In 1840 an amendment to the rules was made to the effect that "the removal of a member from this Ministerium shall not impair his rights in the fund, provided he continue his subscriptions in accordance with these rules."¹²⁸

In 1841 the Fund had assets of \$1,218 and "judging from the past the estimated income, without any increase of subscribers, will be \$240 per annum." Another amendment to the rules provided for life membership, without further payments, for anyone paying \$50 in one sum.¹²⁹

But the assets did not grow as rapidly as hoped for. Consequently in 1844 it was recommended to all pastors in the Ministerium to preach a sermon annually upon the subject and to "take up a collection for the benefit of the fund, or appeal to their congregations in such other mode as they may think best."¹³⁰

The Fund grew more rapidly thereafter. In 1846 it totaled \$2,753 and by 1850 it had increased to \$4,125, with twenty-two subscribing pastors. Some shrewd investing was done with the money, for in 1851 the treasurer, layman Philip Engs, reported that "the stock in the Bowery Insurance Company continues to pay 20 per cent; that in the Ocean Bank has paid this year 10 per cent."¹³¹

In 1852 the first beneficiary was cared for, at \$150 per annum. By 1860 there were twenty-nine annual subscribers and five life members. Two beneficiaries received a total of \$263 for the year. The Fund assets totaled \$8,285.¹³²

¹²⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1835, 8-9; 1856, 43; 1860, 33.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1836, 18.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1837, 9, 11.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1840, 19.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1841, 22.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1844, 14.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1846, 24; 1850, 34; 1851, 33.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1852, 37; 1860, 58.

THE THREE SYNODS

Neither the Hartwick nor the Franckean Synods did anything about such a fund. The General Synod, it is true, had a pastor's fund for the pastors of its district synods. But that fund could hardly be depended upon, for it was exceedingly meager and apparently not well managed, as Philip Engs from the New York Ministerium learned when he took over as the new treasurer.¹³³

When the General Synod in 1859 recommended to its district synods to "organize Synodical Pastors' Fund Societies, auxiliary to the Parent [General Synod] Society," the Hartwick Synod instructed a committee "to prepare a plan for a Pastor's Fund," and to report at the next meeting.¹³⁴ But the committee apparently did not bother presenting a report, and apparently none was called for.

¹³³ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1855, 20. A synopsis of the Fund from its beginning is in *ibid.*, 1853, 23-27. See also above p. 146.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1859, 23; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1859, 11, 37.

Chapter 7

Education, Worship, and Moral Reform

EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

Catechetical Instruction

Luther's Catechism had just about supplanted the Quitman catechism¹ when catechization itself was challenged by the rising tide of revivalism.

To an increasing number of pastors and congregations revivalism was looked upon as superior to catechization. That was certainly true in the Franckean Synod. Commenting on the unusual results of the revivals of 1844, President Lawyer stated, "I rejoice that the anxious seat, among us, is not used as a substitute for the catechism, to afford unconverted persons an entrance into the Church."²

He meant that the anxious seat, symbolic of revivalistic conversion, was actually of first importance and not to be considered simply as replacing traditional catechetical instruction. Unconverted persons might readily become members of the church by way of catechetization, but not by way of the anxious seat. The anxious seat was definite evidence that the person was really converted and therefore truly fit for "entrance into the Church."

One might easily draw a wrong conclusion about this by a not-too-careful use of the Franckean Synod's tables of parochial statistics. At first glance it would appear that most accessions came by confirmation. From 1838 to 1844 the accessions to all congregations were 439 by adult baptism, 209 by letter of transfer, and 1,666 by confirmation. But in 1845 the rubric "by confirmation" gave place to the new rubric "by profession of faith."³ Thereafter the large accessions previously reported under "confirmation" appeared under "profession of faith."

¹ Above, page 46.

² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1844, 7.

³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838-1860.

The conclusion is obvious. All accessions not by adult baptism or letter of transfer were placed under the only other rubric in the table of statistics. Whether people in this group received instruction in the catechism is not disclosed in any reports to the synod about activities in the local congregations. Only revivals were reported, together with the many conversions resulting from them.

It was much the same in the Hartwick Synod. The reports of the congregations abound in references to revivals, but there are none concerning catechetical instruction. Yet the catechism was used regularly, especially in the Sunday schools, where it was recited every Sunday.⁴

Even in the conservative Ministerium catechization was not all what it should have been. That was particularly true of the congregations in the revivalistic district. In 1835 Pastor Charles Smith of the Palatine Church, northwest of Albany, lamented to the Ministerium:

I state with regret that I have found it extremely difficult to collect together a class of young persons for catechetical instruction. This I attribute to the practice so widely pursued at present, and unfortunately for the interest of the Church, so popular of admitting persons into the church communion and fellowship, whilst ignorant of the very first principles of Christianity. The influence of this practice is severely felt among us, and in the minds of many catechetical instruction and formality in religion are inseparably linked together.⁵

Others also were dissatisfied and in 1843 the Ministerium recommended "to all our pastors and congregations the cultivation of an increasing interest in the catechization of the young as one of the great means under God of training up a seed of holiness in the church."⁶

The Hartwick Synod followed close upon this with a resolution to the same effect, "that we lament the deficiency in our churches of catechetical instruction, and that we do most cordially recommend a greater attention to the subject."⁷

Early in the 1850's the effect of revivalism upon catechization was so widespread that President William Strobel in his report to the Ministerium deplored the situation in these words:

In former years catechization was universal and all the youth being brought under its direct influence large numbers became members of the church.

Within a quarter of a century, this, from a variety of causes, has gone very much into disuse; and extraordinary efforts in preaching have taken its place.

⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 55-56. See also below, p. 168.

⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1835, 7.

⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 13.

⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1845, 16.

EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONGREGATION

For the time being this seemed a mighty lever, and great accessions followed from it.

More recently many have lost confidence in the abiding influence of the latter, and such is the state of public feeling that they find it impracticable to return to the former.⁸

That same year (1852) the Ministerium's model constitution for its congregations made it the "duty of the pastor to see to it that the true doctrine of our church, according to Luther's Catechism," be taught in the weekday and Sunday school.⁹

Several years later the Third Conference of the Ministerium, embracing the congregations in the revivalistic district from Albany to Buffalo, reported to the Ministerium that it was unanimous in recommending "the practice of catechetical instruction as one of the chief glories of our church."¹⁰

At the same time the Hartwick Synod, recognizing that "catechization is of great importance" and that it "has not received the attention which its merits demand," resolved that the subject be preached upon at the next meeting of the Synod, "with a view to awakening a deeper interest in the minds of our people with regard to its importance."¹¹

The Ministerium went further in the matter of preaching upon the subject, for in 1860 it recommended "to all the pastors of all the churches" in the Ministerium to preach "annually a sermon on the catechism" in their own congregations.¹²

Sunday Schools

Sunday schools were introduced into the United States as early as 1786 by the Methodist and by 1816 were to be found in various parts of the country. Then Sunday school societies were organized in the larger cities, for the publication of spelling books, hymnbooks and catechisms to be used in the instruction of the children. In 1824 the American Sunday School Union came into being, with the twofold object of promoting Sunday schools and preparing literature both for instruction in the Sunday school and for libraries to supply reading at home.¹³

Among the Lutherans the first Sunday school appears to have been

⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1852, 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1852, 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1855, 24.

¹¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1855, 10, 33.

¹² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 25.

¹³ William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religions in America* (N. Y., 1930), 367-368.

started by Philip Mayer, in St. John's Church, Philadelphia, a member of the New York Ministerium.¹⁴ Mayer's work was duplicated by other Lutheran pastors rather rapidly. In 1828, the first year that the Ministerium listed Sunday schools in its table of parochial reports, there were fifteen schools in twenty-five parishes. Two years later six of the eighteen schools which reported had a total of 440 pupils.¹⁵

When the Hartwick Synod was organized in 1830 it went vigorously to work to get Sunday schools into all the congregations, through a committee headed by its able leader, George Lintner. The better to carry out the plan the synod members organized as a synodical Sunday School Union, which was the accepted procedure of the time. The synodical union became an auxiliary to the General Synod Sunday School Union, formed in 1829, of which Lintner was recording secretary.¹⁶

The Hartwick Synod committee under Lintner worked four years to formulate a plan complete in all its details for starting and conducting schools.¹⁷ The committee conceived of its goal as nothing less than a school in every congregation. It lamented the "apathy exhibited by a large portion of our Lutheran brethren toward the Sunday school system," very probably, the committee charitably put it, because it was still "new and strange."

The record of the Synod in 1836 of twenty-two schools in thirty-eight congregations was far better than the average in the Lutheran Church throughout the United States. But the committee still deplored the fact that "several of the largest and most thrifty of our congregations have reported no schools at all."

Hartwick Synod Plan for Sunday Schools

The Hartwick Synod plan for setting up a Sunday school was clear and concise. "Early on the appointed day," the plan stated, "the superintendent, secretary and teachers should appear at the place appointed for holding the school, having the books and every other requisite; and thus duly prepared, let them await the assembling of the meeting, direct-

¹⁴ Adolph Spaeth, "Sunday Schools in the Lutheran Church," in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, 467.

¹⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1828, 7; 1830, 19.

¹⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1832, 15; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1829, 8, 9; 1831, 11, 22-24.

¹⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 15-19. The detailed plan is on pp. 50-56. Most of the story was published by the present author under the title of "The Pioneers Had Ideas," in *The Lutheran*, Sept. 25, 1946, 15-16.

ing the children as they enter to take their seats, the girls and boys in separate divisions."

The meeting was to be opened with a hymn and prayer, followed by a "suitable address or a portion of the holy Scriptures." The superintendent should then address the school in the words: "We are now ready to engage in the duties of the school," followed by the reading of the "regulations" stipulating the responsibilities of the officers, teachers, and parents.

The superintendent himself, according to the regulations, was obligated to "direct the general concerns of the school, take care of the books, and see that all the regulations were carried into effect." He was to look after the "disorderly scholars, to reprove them and to take such other measures as may insure their good order and obedience." He and the teachers were "occasionally to visit the scholars and their parents." He or the teachers should visit the absentees "every week if possible."

The rules concerning the teachers were rigorous. They "shall be regular and punctual in attendance." They were to "maintain order in their classes by the most *temperate* measures." They were to "prepare themselves for the lesson by a careful attention to it during the week," and, to keep them on the alert, "an examination of these lessons shall take place quarterly by the superintendent." In addition to the general visitation of pupils, the teacher was "always to make it his business to visit them in sickness, and, as opportunity occurs, read a chapter and spend a few minutes in prayer." They were also obliged to "attend a monthly concert of prayer¹⁸ for Sabbath schools."

Parents were to have a special invitation to these monthly prayer meetings. They were also, with their children, to "be convened at least once a year" for a program of addresses and exercises that were "calculated to excite an interest for the school."

"On concluding the reading of these regulations," so the plan went on, "the superintendent will next proceed to read the rules for the scholars, of which the following are given as an example, so plain, that they can be understood by the youngest scholars."

There were nineteen "I musts" and "I must nots" on the list. They would scarcely harmonize with the precepts of a modern school of "pupil self-expression." Yet doubtless even modern teachers have secretly felt it desirable to have children "listen" more and "express themselves" less.

¹⁸ Described below, p. 224.

EDUCATION, WORSHIP, AND MORAL REFORM

1. I must always mind the superintendent and all the teachers of this school.
2. I must come every Sunday, and be here when school goes in.
3. I must go to my seat as soon as I come in.
4. I must always be still.
5. I must not leave my seat until the scholars are dismissed.
6. I must take good care of my book.
7. I must not lean on the next scholar.
8. I must walk softly in the school.
9. I must not make a noise by the church door, or school door, but must go in as soon as I come there.
10. I must always go to church.
 - I must behave well in the street when I am going to church.
 - I must walk softly into church.
 - I must sit still in my place till after church.
 - I must go away from the church as soon as I go out.
11. I must try to remember all that my teacher tells me in school, and improve my time at home.
12. I must read the Bible every day.
13. I must obey my father and mother, and be kind to my brothers and sisters, and to everybody.
14. I must not keep company with children who say bad words, or lie, and swear, and steal.
15. I must not be with the idle, or such as break the Sabbath, and who do not care what the Bible says.

In the instruction of the pupils, memory work was of course required, consisting of Scriptures, hymns, and the Catechism. For the lesson material the uniform Selected Scripture Lessons were to be used, "so that every class shall receive instruction on the same lesson at the same time."

A final recommendation in the plan had to do with building up a good circulating library in every Sunday school. The books, it was urged, "should generally be of a religious character, written in an interesting and familiar style suited to the circumstances and the capacities of children." They were to consist "chiefly of biographies of Scripture characters such as Joseph, Moses, Elijah, etc.; and of ministers as Luther, Francke, and Schwartz, of laymen and pious children, etc." Particular emphasis was placed upon "religious tracts, especially those of a narrative kind."

The plan bore good fruit, for six years later (1842) every pastor reporting to the Synod had at least one Sunday school; the twenty-seven congregations in the Synod that year reported a total of thirty-four schools. Twenty-three of the schools reporting had a total of 152 teachers and 1,000 "scholars."¹⁹

¹⁹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1842, 8.*

Growth of the Sunday Schools

The New York Ministerium was not far behind the Hartwick Synod. At about the same time (1842) there were twenty-three Sunday schools in thirty-eight congregations reporting, with 230 teachers and 1,311 child "scholars" and 60 adults. Philip Mayer's congregation in Philadelphia had the largest school, with 36 teachers and 309 child "scholars."²⁰

In the Franckean Synod, while some parochial reports mentioned "flourishing Sunday schools," there appeared to be fewer in proportion to the number of congregations than in the other two synods. In 1838, the year after the Synod was formed, there were ten schools in the nineteen congregations reporting. The largest parish, that of Philip Wieting, reported a communicant membership of 300, but the Sunday school was "just organizing."²¹

The ratio of the number of schools to the number of congregations in the Franckean Synod actually decreased in the two decades following. In 1849 there were twenty schools in forty-five congregations reporting, and in 1856 thirteen schools in thirty congregations reporting. In 1857 however the ratio increased; that year there were eighteen schools in twenty-four congregations reporting.²²

Throughout the three synods there were problems connected with the Sunday school movement that had to be worked out. In the Hartwick Synod President Senderling reported in 1838 that there had been "prejudice" in some quarters against the Sunday schools "because [they were] managed by church members instead of ministers," but that this was "rapidly dissolving."²³ If there were any question like that in the Ministerium, it would be cared for in the model constitution for congregations of 1852, which provided that the pastor was the one who "shall have the supervision of the weekday and Sunday school."²⁴

Union Sunday schools, which had in them pupils from various church denominations, were frequently another problem. All the synods had them. The Ministerium appeared to have the least, for the congregations which reported having union schools had also their own Lutheran Sunday schools. For example, the congregation at Ghent, south of Albany, stated that in addition to its own Sunday school "many children are found in

²⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1841, 7.

²¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838, 4, 5.

²² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1849, 22; 1856, 8; 1857, 9.

²³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 27.

²⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1852, 36.

the schools conducted by the members of the Reformed and Lutheran church united." In the congregation at Red Hook, about halfway between Albany and New York City, there were two Sunday schools, but there were also "three union Sunday schools in the bounds of the congregation."²⁵

In the Franckean Synod the number of union schools was only occasionally listed, but the largest number appeared in 1849, when there were seven among the twenty Sunday schools which reported.²⁶

The Hartwick Synod appeared to have had a larger number of union schools than were to be found in the other two synods. In the period from 1852 when union and Lutheran schools were first reported separately, the number of union schools which reported was almost always greater than the number of Lutheran schools. But the figures raise questions too. For example, the congregation in the little village of Bern, near Albany, reported in 1853 no Lutheran and *eight* union schools, with a total of 250 pupils; and the small parish of East Camp and Woodstock, south of Albany, reported in 1855 one Lutheran and *five* union schools, with a total of only six teachers and forty pupils.²⁷ The large number of union schools in instances like these refer to the total number of such schools within the village or parish, with some Lutheran children attending each school.

In the learning procedure in the Sunday school memorization was of primary importance. Here is a description of how the Sunday school at Malden, under Pastor Thomas Lape of the Hartwick Synod, conducted its learning procedure:

About 20 teachers and 80 pupils compose the school. Most of the young converts entered into the work as teachers. They have generally been faithful and devoted to the cause. The amount of scriptural knowledge acquired is truly great. Many of the pupils have recited as many as ten lessons at one time. A colored boy one day recited 11 lessons, having learned 16. A girl has regularly recited from 200 to 500 questions in the Child's Question Book. Such an amount of scriptural knowledge is truly good seed, which the "Lord of the harvest" will bless in due time.²⁸

Parochial Schools

In the Ministerium there evolved also in this period the weekday or parochial school in the congregations that were predominantly German.

²⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1838, 7; 1852, 10.

²⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1849, 12.

²⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1853, 11; 1855, 15.

²⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1857, 12.

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

What appears to be the first weekday school was established in 1837 in St. Matthew's Church, New York City, of which Frederick W. Geissenhainer, Jr., was pastor. It had "between 80 and 90 scholars, where the German and English language are taught by two teachers, and needle-work by a lady; particular attention is also paid to religious instruction."²⁹

Ten years later St. Matthew's Church, then under Pastor Carl Stohlmann, had two "weekday schools for poor children, one of them averaging from 125 to 150 children." The schools were maintained by the church at a cost of about \$700 annually. "The main object is to give the children a religious education, and to prepare them to become useful members of the church and of the community."³⁰

About the time St. Matthew's got its second day school under way, Pastor Francis H. Guenther started "a German day school" in St. John's Church, Buffalo. "Besides the usual branches," he reported, "religious instruction is imparted to our youth, and on the Lord's day afternoon the catechism is explained and enforced."³¹

In the 1850's one day school after another was established in the larger cities between New York and Buffalo. In 1853 there were seven, in 1856 the number had increased to twelve and by 1860 there were no less than fifteen. The Ministerium in that year had fifty-five congregations.³²

The Ministerium never took any action on the subject of day schools, but its Third Conference, embracing the congregations from Albany to Buffalo, did. In 1855 that Conference unanimously "recommended to our congregations the institution of parochial schools, under the supervision of the pastor and church council."³³

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

Simple Order of Worship

Worship in the church continued to be of the simplest order. There was nothing remotely suggesting the present-day Common Service. What the Ministerium called a "liturgy" even in its "new and enlarged edition"

²⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1837, 7.

³⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1847, 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1843, 8.

³² *Ibid.*, 1853, 9-10; 1856, 10-11; 1860, 10-11. The parochial report table in 1860 gives only 13; two others were not reported that year, but were reported in 1859 and in 1861.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1853, 24.

of 1834,³⁴ embraced the following sections, which are quoted from the *Liturgy* itself, and all of which were used only by the pastor. There were no responsive readings.

- I. Four Forms of Confession of Sin, and four other Prayers, proper to be used in the Morning Service immediately after its introduction by the singing of a hymn.
- II. Eight General Prayers, proper to be used in Public Worship.
- III. Five [General] Prayers for Festival Occasions. (For Christmas Day, Beginning of a New Year, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Whitsunday.)
- IV. Six Prayers After Sermon.
- V. Scriptural Benedictions, For the Conclusion of Public Worship.
- VI. A Table of the Selections from the Scriptures commonly called "the Gospels and Epistles."

A note appended to the table of lessons was carried over from the first edition of 1814 which had been compiled in the period of Rationalism.³⁵

N.B.—These selections are added to the *Liturgy*, because it has been customary in many of the Lutheran churches in the United States to have them read regularly in public worship. But it is necessary to remark that there is an impropriety in congregations confining themselves year after year, to these portions of the sacred volume, and neglecting all the rest. Besides, although some of these selections are excellent, not a few of them have been chosen injudiciously, or are so unnaturally torn away from the context, as to be dark and unedifying instead of exhibiting a clear and connected view of the great facts, truths, and lessons, contained in Holy Writ, especially of those which are most interesting to Christians. It is very desirable, that other and larger sections of the Scriptures should be read in our religious assemblies; and it is pleasing to find, that this is done in the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Saxony, Wirtemberg, and other Protestant countries in Germany.

Then followed a series of occasional orders, all of which also were used only by the pastor:

- VII. The Ministration of Baptism to Infants.
- VIII. The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years.
- IX. The Order of Confirmation.
- X. Order of the Service preparatory to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- XI. The Administration of the Lord's Supper.
- XII. A Form for the Consecration of a church.
- XIII. A Form for the ordination of a minister.
- XIV. A Form for the inauguration of a ruling officer of a congregation.
- XV. The Solemnization of marriage.
- XVI. The Burial of the Dead.

³⁴ *A Liturgy For the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, new and enlarged edition. Published by order of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York*, N. Y., 1834, 172 pp. This is the latter part of the volume titled *A Collection of Hymns and a Liturgy for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches . . . Published by Order of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York*, N. Y., 1834, 488 pp. The original edition was published in 1814.

³⁵ This note was retained also in the 1850 edition.

The concluding portion³⁶ of nearly 70 pages of the *Liturgy* was devoted to:

Part I. Prayers for the Use of Families.

Part II. Prayers for the Use of Individuals.

What was true of the Ministerium in the simplicity of its worship was no less true of the Hartwick and Franckean Synods. Marcus W. Empie, pastor in the Franckean Synod, described the worship in the 1830's "in our Lutheran churches" as "very simple, consisting of singing, Scripture reading, prayer, preaching, prayer, singing, benediction; no liturgical services, no confession of sins, no recitation of creeds, no responses."³⁷

Even as late as 1861 the group of pastors of the New York Ministerium who withdrew to form the first New Jersey Synod established officially as the order of worship in their congregations:

1. Anthem or hymn.
2. Altar service—confession and prayer as laid down in the Liturgy [of the General Synod].
3. Hymn.
4. Reading of the Scriptures.
5. General Prayer, either extempore or from the Liturgy as the Pastor may elect.
6. Hymn.
7. Sermon.
8. Prayer.
9. Singing, with the doxology.
10. Benediction.³⁸

New German Liturgy and Hymnal

As the German congregations developed, there was a growing demand for a new liturgy in their own language. The one in use, published by the Pennsylvania Ministerium, had not been changed since 1818 and that one had "differed but slightly" from the previous edition of 1786.³⁹ As a result, a joint committee from the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the New York Ministerium and the Ohio Synod arranged a new edition "carefully revised and much enlarged" and published it in 1842. The

³⁶ Title page for this part: *Prayers For the Use of Families and Individuals. Published by order of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New York* (no date), being pp. 97-172 of the *Liturgy*.

³⁷ Article in *A Reunion of Ministers and Churches* [of the Franckean Synod] held . . . 1881. (Phila., 1881, 211 pp.), p. 79. The book is a collection of addresses made and papers read at that meeting.

³⁸ *Minutes, New Jersey Synod*, 1861, 14.

³⁹ Preface to the *Liturgy* of 1842 and to the *Liturgy* of 1860, cited in notes 40 and 45 below.

members of the joint committee from the New York Ministerium were three prominent pastors: Philip F. Mayer of St. John's Church, Philadelphia; Henry I. Schmidt, professor at Gettysburg College and Seminary; and Carl F. E. Stohlmann of St. Matthew's Church, New York City.⁴⁰ The New York Ministerium promptly recommended the new liturgy to its German congregations.⁴¹

The Germans of the New York Ministerium also got together with those of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the West Pennsylvania Synod in the publication in 1849 of a new German hymnal.⁴² This was praised in the New York Ministerium as "decidedly the best collection of hymns in the German language current in the United States." The Germans were so taken with the book that they declared, with the approval of the Ministerium, that they "view with decided disapprobation the surreptitious attempts made in some quarters to introduce other hymnbooks into our [German] churches," and concluded with the recommendation that the new book be "adopted as early as possible" in all their churches.⁴³

The resolution was twice repeated, in 1855 and again in 1859. In the latter year the recommendation added that "those wishing to adopt any other book first ask the advice" of the Ministerium.⁴⁴

A Common Service

A revision by the Pennsylvania Ministerium of the English liturgy resulted in the publication in 1860 of the first Common Service.⁴⁵

The "Order of Morning Service" is readily recognized in the Common Service of the present day:⁴⁶

The Introit and Gloria Patri
The Confession of Sins⁴⁷
The Kyrie
The Gloria in Excelsis
The Collect for the Day

⁴⁰ *Liturgie und Kirchenagende für die Evangelisch-Lutherischen Gemeinden in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio und den benachbarten Staaten*. Phila., 1842.

⁴¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1841, 11.

⁴² *Deutsches Gesangbuch für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten*. Phila., 1849.

⁴³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1847, 18; 1850, 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1855, 29; 1859, 33.

⁴⁵ *A Liturgy for the Use of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. By authority of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States*. Phila., 1860.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-26.

⁴⁷ The Confessions of Sins contained in the *Liturgy* of the New York Ministerium, "which has found more general acceptance in our English churches than any other, has been added" here. Preface to *Ibid.*, p. [iii].

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The Epistle
The Gospel
The Apostles' Creed; the Nicene Creed
The Litany or other General Prayer
A Hymn
The Sermon
The Lord's Prayer
A Hymn
The Benediction

The order for "The Holy Communion" followed immediately after the "Order of Morning Service":⁴⁸

The Preface
The Sanctus
The Proper Preface
The Consecration
 The Eucharistic Prayer
 The Lord's Prayer
 The Words of Institution
The Agnus Dei
The Administration
The Nunc Dimittis
The Thanksgiving
The Benediction

The new English liturgy was so well received in the New York Ministerium that that body declared itself in favor of "adopting some liturgical services for the use of [all] our churches in this country, by which greater uniformity in our modes of worship may be secured." To that end it instructed its delegates to the approaching meeting of the General Synod "to bring this matter to the attention of that body."⁴⁹

There was also an appeal in 1860 to the Ministerium to adopt a "common book of church tunes." But nothing came of this because, as the Ministerium declared, "Whilst we would unite" with "the organist who made the request, in our wishes that one common book of sacred music would be used in all our churches, yet as a Synod, having no authority, we can not interfere with individual congregations in their church music."⁵⁰

Arrogant Choirs Condemned

In many congregations of the Ministerium over a period of "many years" a congregational problem kept festering until it eventually, in

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-32.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1860, 31.

⁵⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 37-38.

1856, came before the Ministerium. It had to do with the "mischievous change in the order of public worship" whereby congregational singing "has in many of our congregations been suffered to fall into desuetude and to be superseded by the performance of self-constituted choirs, who more or less monopolize this spiritual exercise."⁵¹

After "considerable discussion" the Ministerium condemned the practice and instructed a committee to bring to the next meeting a draft of a letter to be sent to all its congregations, in order to bring about "the revival and restoration of the ancient and edifying mode of worship and praising God in spiritual songs and hymns by the united voice of the whole congregation."⁵²

The committee consisted of three prominent pastors of New York City: Carl Stohlmann of St. Matthew's Church, James L. Schock of St. James Church, and Henry I. Schmidt, professor of German literature at Columbia College. The committee reported the following year with a stinging rebuke of some 2,500 words.⁵³

"It has long been the subject of complaint," the letter began, "that the good old practice of congregational singing has in a great measure fallen into disuse." Quite bluntly it stated that "this evil" had largely been "the result of the arrogant proceeding of choirs or their leaders" in taking over full control of the music regardless "of the views and feelings of pastor and people," which left the "congregations no alternative but to succumb to the infliction in mute amazement or disgust."

As a result, the choirs had taken it for granted that the music "belonged exclusively" to them, regardless of how well or how poorly they were qualified. Then, softening its tone a bit, the letter went on: "Now we feel bound to say to you, dear brethren, that such a state of things is utterly irreconcilable with the ends of public worship."

"In the first place," the letter continued in tougher tone, "it should not be left entirely to the taste of the leader of the choir to select collections of church tunes, or to his caprice to introduce new ones." The pastor and elders of the church were to be consulted. But that was mild compared with what the letter had to say in "second place":

It is utterly incompatible with the fitness of things and the solemnity of the Lord's day and house and worship, to adapt secular or profane tunes to the sacred hymns of the church. We know that the practice prevails extensively

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1856, 27.

⁵² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 27, 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1857, 40-45.

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

of singing hymns to wornout worldly tunes, which, having gone out of fashion in social circles, are deemed good enough for the worship of God.

The letter concluded with a warmhearted appeal:

We exhort and beseech you, brethren, to let no considerations of expediency no conventional notions, prevent your return to the good old practices of our evangelical church, of uniting all hearts and voices in songs of adoration and praise to Him who reigns on high, to Him who came on earth and died for our salvation.

The letter was adopted by the Ministerium, and the pastors were instructed to "read the address to their congregations and to exhort them to adopt the suggestions contained therein."⁵⁴

It would be interesting to know of the reactions in the congregations to this letter, but oddly enough no comment is to be found in the minutes of the Ministerium.

The Hartwick Synod had the matter of congregational singing up at the same time but there appeared to be no problem like that in the Ministerium. A committee was appointed in 1856 "to prepare an address to the churches upon the subject of congregational singing," in order to get the congregations to take full advantage of this part of public worship. The committee "presented a very able and interesting report, which was ordered printed" and commended to the churches. The next year an additional resolution "recommended to the members of our congregations the importance of acquiring a thorough knowledge of this divine art" of church music and "to instruct the rising generation in it."⁵⁵

The Hartwick Synod had also a minor problem occasioned by the question whether church buildings might be used for other than church functions. The Synod answered the question by recommending "to the trustees of the churches in connection with this body that they do not grant the use of their houses of worship to hold secular meetings."⁵⁶

The Crucifix and Sign of the Cross

About the time of the arrogant choir situation the Ministerium was afflicted with another problem in several of its congregations. This had to do with the introduction of the crucifix and making the sign of the cross in baptism. It broke out first in the German Trinity Church in

⁵⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1857, 18.*

⁵⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1856, 8; 1857, 20; 1858, 42.*

⁵⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1838, 19.*

Rondout, Ulster County, of which Carl H. Siebke, who had come from Bremen in 1846, was pastor. President Strobel of the Ministerium visited the church, but he was "unable to effect an amicable adjustment." He then referred the problem to the Ministerium at its meeting in 1854, in the form of three questions:

A. Is it right and proper to introduce a crucifix into a Lutheran church, and is it in accordance with the usages of said church in the United States?

B. Is it expedient to use the sign of the cross in baptism, when the parents have conscientious scruples?

C. Has a pastor the right to introduce new usages into his church, without the consent of his church officers?⁵⁷

The matter provoked "a debate of a protracted and deeply interesting nature, conducted in a spirit of love and forbearance, in which many of the members, clerical and lay, participated." It was then handed over to a committee to iron out. Reporting later in the meeting, the committee provided a solution so good that it was unanimously adopted.

"Although it is an historical fact," the report opened, "that a great many of our churches in Europe have retained the crucifix in their places of worship; still hitherto it has had no place (until lately in a few of them) in the churches connected with our regularly organized synods in the United States." Its introduction, while "not a matter of conscience to a Protestant," would nevertheless "create mistrust and prejudices in the Christian community around us." The Ministerium therefore, while "assuming no authority either to forbid or enjoin in the case, deems its introduction into any of our churches inexpedient and unwise."

Concerning the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, the report held that "it manifestly forms no part of the ordinance as established by Christ, and we do not believe that the consciences of parents should be burdened by a mere ceremony which may be regarded as altogether useless."

On the third question regarding the right of the pastor to introduce new practices, the report stated that "prudence would dictate the greatest concessions to the feelings of a congregation, even to a minority of them."

A committee was then instructed to go to the church in Rondout with "the resolutions as just passed, to see if it be possible for them to arrange the difficulties existing there."

⁵⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1854, 18-19, 22-23, 36-37.

The problem broke out a second time five years later, in 1859, in the First German Lutheran Church in Albany, of which John F. C. Hennicke, who had arrived from Berlin three years previously, was the pastor. He had lost no time in introducing "the burning of tapers in the day time at the celebration of the Eucharist, the introduction of the crucifix, the sign of the cross at the pronouncing of the benediction, and the chanting of Latin hymns."⁵⁸

The issue was just as promptly settled by the Ministerium. A special committee reported that it deemed the introduction of these practices "as unadvised, inexpedient and exceedingly unbecoming." Furthermore, "these practices, never in vogue and certainly unknown to our church in this country, and utterly repulsive to the views and feelings of Christians in America, are calculated to produce false impressions among our own people and in surrounding religious communities." Finally, since the "introduction of such practices is plainly indicative of a decided leaning towards a well-known section of the Church," the committee advised the pastors who "regard the practices as 'essential,' to leave the Ministerium and join a body of which such usages are approved and practiced."

The report was promptly adopted by the Ministerium, and a committee delegated to visit the congregation at Albany to straighten out the difficulty. As a result, Pastor Hennicke "expressed sorrow and penitence for his conduct, and earnestly entreated to be restored to the confidence and fellowship of the Ministerium." He signed a declaration "abjuring his former errors and renewing his fealty" to the Ministerium. Then he resigned the Albany congregation and became assistant pastor at old St. Matthew's Church in New York City. But he remained with the Ministerium only a few years longer and then joined the more conservative Steimle Synod when that body was organized in 1866.⁵⁹

Six pastors of the Ministerium however did not like the decision relating to Hennicke. But instead of bringing their protest to the Ministerium, they committed the "unprecedented" and "highly objectionable" act of airing their views "before the public" by publishing their protest in *Der Lutherische Herold*.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1859, 28-29.

⁵⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1866, 14; *Protocol, Steimle Synod*, 1866, p. 1.

⁶⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 53. The protest was published in the December, 1859, issue of the *Herold*.

To correct any misunderstanding, the Ministerium adopted a supplementary resolution in 1860 declaring that its decision of the previous year did not mean to convey any "opposition to any article of the Augsburg Confession, or to exercise any spiritual despotism over any congregation, nor to say anything disrespectful of those usages as they exist in the church of our fathers."⁶¹

There was also a question as to "allowing sponsors at the baptism of children." The matter was discussed by the Third Conference of the Ministerium and its conclusion was adopted by the Ministerium, that "the parents are the most suitable persons to take charge of the Christian education of their own children," but that "on no account should any be admitted to the solemn office of sponsors but persons of good Christian standing and character."⁶²

Paintings in the Churches

The Franckean Synod also had a problem connected with worship which it promptly disposed of. In 1856 a resolution was introduced "at the request of a layman" that since "ornamental painting in the church represents pride, and painted images in the church represent idolatry," the Synod was asked to "disapprove of them, and to recommend to all the churches in connection with this Synod to be free from such appearances."⁶³

A committee was appointed to study the complaint and to report back. It did, but not the way the petitioner had expected. On the contrary it stated emphatically that it "cannot endorse the sentiment that ornamental painting in churches does necessarily indicate pride, nor that painted representations, which the author of the resolution improperly calls images, when their only object is to carry out artistic taste or design, indicate idolatry." The committee then took the good brother to task by telling him "carefully and prayerfully to be careful to avoid any conclusion which would imply unchristian censure upon the doings of others." The Synod, "after some extended and profitable remarks from different members," adopted the report unanimously.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1860, 35-36.

⁶² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 27.

⁶³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1856, 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1856, 9-10.

Few Revivals in the Ministerium

The attitude toward revivals expressed so vividly by President Quitman in 1821⁶⁵ obtained throughout the Ministerium with only rare exceptions.

Reports of revivals were few. In the 1830's one came from Pastor William Starman in far-off Waldoborough, Maine, that he had had two "protracted meetings" in which some of the "ministerial brethren of the Congregational churches" assisted. But the meetings appeared to have had less of the emotional fervor of those held in New York, for while they "were well attended" they were nevertheless "very solemn."⁶⁶

Another interesting report came from President Pohlman concerning his congregation at New Germantown, New Jersey. "It has pleased him in whom all fulness dwells," Pohlman wrote in 1840, "to pour out of the influences of his Spirit upon our barren Zion, and such a year of rich and abundant blessing it has never before been our privilege to enjoy. One hundred and forty have been added to the Church."⁶⁷

That was quite a contrast to the ways of the older generation. An example of the latter had been made just a few years previously by President Wackerhagen, when he reported concerning his church at Clermont that "the principles of unostentatious piety seem to prevail among the generality of my people."⁶⁸

Another interesting report came from the three newly established German congregations at Buffalo, Lancaster, and Lockport, at the extreme end of western New York. The pastor, William Fetter, stated that "interesting revivals of religion have taken place in all my congregations, but especially at Ebenezer, where the attendance has increased from fifteen or thirty to nearly 300. Vices which formerly prevailed are vanishing and a godly life is led by many. Peace prevails in all my congregations."⁶⁹

The revival eventually got into a few of the Ministerium's older congregations. In 1844 Pastor Ephraim Deyoe reported for his congregation in the village of Ghent:

⁶⁵ Above, p. 71.

⁶⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834, 9-10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1840, 8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1838, 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1843, 9.

We have been favored during the past year with the gracious outpourings of the Spirit of God. We held a series of meetings last winter which were blessed beyond our expectations. The church was greatly revived, and many an impenitent person was heard inquiring, "What shall I do to be saved?"⁷⁰

The Ministerium took no action for or against revivals. It did however in 1855 take a firm stand in "heartily disapproving of the controversy concerning old and new measures as it has been carried on in our [Lutheran] Church for the last few years." Further, it "condemned the two extremes into which the present age seems prone to run—a superstitious veneration for antiquity on the one hand, and a fondness for novelty on the other." It then left the whole matter to each pastor to "adopt such measures in his own charge as he conscientiously believes to be consistent with the Bible and likely to prove useful."⁷¹

Revivals in Hartwick and Franckean Synods

In the 1840's the reports concerning revivals were depressing. President Lape of the Hartwick Synod lamented the "sad decline of vital godliness [for] we are in the midst of a spiritual dearth." President Diefendorf of the Franckean Synod reported in the same vein that "we have to deplore the languishing state of Zion; our churches are too dead and formal, and consequently but few conversions."⁷²

That was, in fact, the lament of the church at large. Commenting on the reports of eleven Lutheran synods, the Hartwick Synod's committee on minutes of sister synods concluded that there was need for "mourning over the languishing state of our churches generally," as well as for praying for the "outpouring of the Spirit, that his work may be gloriously revived in our midst."⁷³

Things took a turn for the better in the 1850's, especially in the Franckean Synod. Once again was heard the joyous note that "the Lord has poured out his Holy Spirit on a goodly number of churches" in the Synod, blessing them "with powerful and extensive revivals" so that "hundreds have been brought out of nature's darkness into the bright and marvelous light of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." A new note was also heard in the Synod. Revivals were "characterized by less

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1844, 10.

⁷¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1845, 23-24.

⁷² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1845, 21; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 7.

⁷³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1847, 11.

excitement, sustained by less extraordinary effort, and continued after special means were suspended.”⁷⁴

The great revival of 1857, which began in New York City after the panic in Wall Street and swept throughout the North, was a matter of great rejoicing in the Franckean Synod. “Our hearts have been cheered with the intelligence,” the Synod declared, and its members were “more than ever encouraged to go forward with renewed energy in the cause of Christ.”⁷⁵

Hartwick Seminary had quite a revival in 1854, as reported by Professor Levi Sternberg, its new principal. In the course of his work that year he “witnessed an interesting work of grace among the members of the [Hartwick] Institution which seemed to have its origin without any visible agency, and resulted in the conversion of nearly every member of the school.”⁷⁶

Temperance

In the temperance movement, the Hartwick and Franckean Synods had gone far⁷⁷ before the Ministerium took any part in it.

The earliest record of temperance activity in the Ministerium appears to be in 1840, when a temperance meeting was held in connection with the synodical meeting in the Lutheran Church in Valatie, south of Albany. Many members of the congregation were present in addition to the members of the Ministerium. President Augustus Wackerhagen made “an eloquent address.” His speech was doubtless as picturesque as his president’s report, in which he excoriated the “hideous monster of intemperance, still stalking abroad through the length and breadth of the land, seeking and finding and carrying off its numberless victims.” Then he called upon his hearers “as one man, to apply our unremitting efforts to stem the torrent of mischief around us, and with word, and deed, and example, and prayer” to promote the cause of temperance.⁷⁸

Several years later, in 1843, the Ministerium adopted its first and only resolution on the subject, in which it “earnestly recommended” to all its congregations “to be more zealously engaged in the temperance cause,

⁷⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1851, 5, 10; 1852, 20.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1858, 7.

⁷⁶ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1854, 16.

⁷⁷ Above, pp. 89, 115.

⁷⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1840, 11, 18.

believing it incumbent on the church to lead in this great moral reformation."⁷⁹

The Hartwick and Franckean Synods, on the other hand, had already advanced to the point where total abstinence was their goal. Then in the 1850's they pursued a new course, in which "moral suasion" gave way to "legislative enactments." Wanted was a "prohibitory law and the confiscation" of liquor. "There can be no question of the propriety and necessity of such a law," the leaders of the movement held; "it is right, wise, constitutional, and feasible." The Maine prohibition law was held up as an excellent example to be emulated and the churches were urged to use every influence to get a similar law enacted in New York.⁸⁰

The prohibition law was enacted but Governor Horatio Seymour vetoed it. It is not hard to imagine the wrath which he drew down upon himself for showing "his subserviency to the rum power, and [he has] forfeited the respect of every friend of right and virtue." It was good that there was an election law which would "place the traitor back into the hands of the people whose interests he had betrayed," so that they could defeat him roundly. He would then have "his name placed with the traitors of our Saviour and of our country."⁸¹

Then a stringent prohibition law was passed in 1855, but those were wise church leaders who said that two things would still have to be determined, namely, "whether the law will be pronounced constitutional," and if so, "whether it will be enforced."⁸²

The first fear turned out to be real, for the following year the New York Court of Appeals declared the law unconstitutional. Both the Hartwick and the Franckean Synods voted strong resolutions to renew their efforts for the enactment of another strict law, but one that would stick, because that was the "most suitable remedy to counteract the untold evils" of drinking.⁸³

On the eve of the Civil War the Franckean Synod appraised the temperance movement and found that much had been accomplished. "Through public lectures and temperance publications, light has steadily been poured upon the mind of the public. The church at length, in a

⁷⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1843, 15.

⁸⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1852, 21; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1852, 26-27.

⁸¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1854, 12.

⁸² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1855, 21.

⁸³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 23-24; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1856, 12-13.

goodly measure, has been awakened from her slumbers and opened her eyes to the fearful realities of intemperance."⁸⁴

By an action the following year the Hartwick Synod added what could be considered another accomplishment, in the conviction that the "temperance reformation is the work of God, and identified with the interests of religion." For that reason the Synod recommended to its churches to make the cause a subject of prayer and to contribute to it regularly, the same as for other "benevolent enterprises which claim the prayers and contributions of Christians in our day."⁸⁵

During the course of these developments, the Franckean Synod eventually made an official declaration concerning the Lord's Supper, resolving that "all the ministers of Synod be requested to see that at the Lord's table the juice of the vine, and not alcoholic wine, be furnished."⁸⁶

Abolition of Slavery

The anti-slavery movement was not mentioned in the minutes of the Hartwick Synod after the resolution of 1845⁸⁷ was tabled. In the Ministerium the only incident having to do with slavery was a brief address at the meeting in 1857 by a local agent of the African Colonization Society. The Ministerium thanked him and in a polite gesture commended to its churches "the object which the New York Colonization Society has in view."⁸⁸

In the Franckean Synod on the contrary there was an increasing amount of activity. It noted carefully the action of other Lutheran synods pro and con, such as that of the Pittsburgh Synod in condemning slavery in 1846, and of the North Carolina Synod in referring to the Franckeans' "Fraternal Appeal" as an "incendiary document."⁸⁹

It condemned the Fugitive Slave Bill as "the ill-shaped and hydra-headed offspring of bold usurpation and unmitigated cruelty." By implication it did not disapprove of assisting in the underground railway to help runaway slaves to freedom: "We will not cease our prayers and efforts to emancipate" the slave, the Franckeans said, and "in the exercise of our sympathies we obey God rather than men." It condemned

⁸⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1859, 12-13.

⁸⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1860, 37.

⁸⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1852, 24.

⁸⁷ See above, p. 92.

⁸⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1857, 25.

⁸⁹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 17; 1848, 13.

also the "infamous bill of abominations called the Kansas-Nebraska Bill" and regarded "with feelings of contempt and indignation the course pursued by [Stephen] Douglas."⁹⁰

As the controversy became more bitter throughout the land, so the tone of the Franckean Synod's resolutions became more vehement. Condemning the Fugitive Slave Law, it declared that "the time for holding conventions, engaging in discussions, and adopting resolutions" had passed. "The time for decisive *action* has come." Shortly afterward its members were shocked over the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, "which furnished most humiliating and melancholy evidence of the reach, rapacity and recklessness of the slave power."⁹¹

Yet on the eve of the Civil War they were to be commended for embodying a thoroughly Christian sentiment in one more blast: "While we have compassion for the master and slave, and would do them good, we hold the system of American slavery in utter detestation."⁹²

But in the midst of all the bitter controversy and agitation, neither the Ministerium nor the Hartwick Synod had a word to say about the institution of slavery. It is especially difficult to understand how the Hartwick Synod, so ardent in the prohibition movement, could be so utterly silent on the anti-slavery question.

Use Of Tobacco

The tobacco question came up again in the Franckean Synod in 1858. This time it had been put into the report of the committee on temperance, and the things the committee said about the use of tobacco were not edifying:

Were it only our aged friends indulging a little [in tobacco], or invalids using a little for their health sake, we should have remained silent. What are the facts! Why everywhere, and almost all the "lords of creation" are given to this disgusting habit. Carpet, and stove, and church pews (yea, and pulpits, too,) bear ample testimony to the fact that the number of tobacco eaters is legion.⁹³

This time there was no divided opinion about the "disgusting habit."⁹⁴ After a "somewhat spirited discussion" the Franckeans declared that "the common use of tobacco is fraught with evil to those who have acquired

⁹⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1851, 15-16; 1853, 13; 1854, 13.

⁹¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1856, 15; 1857, 18.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1860, 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1858, 10, 12.

⁹⁴ See above, p. 122.

the habit, and in its influences on young men is most pernicious." For that reason it was decided that "*we*, from a sense of decency and Christian propriety, abstain from its habitual or common use, and discourage the habit in others."⁹⁵

Two years later, in 1860, a committee of the Franckean Synod came upon a resolution in the minutes of the recent meeting of the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention of Wisconsin that "no appropriation shall be made to any beneficiary who is in the habit of using tobacco." This was promptly called to the attention of the Synod. No action was taken at that meeting, but in 1862 the Synod adopted an identical resolution.⁹⁶

Secret Societies

The Franckean Synod had the question of secret societies come up in the 1840's. The societies, it was reported, "hold their meetings and transact their business in secret" and their members are "required, either by some honorary obligation or bound by an oath" to keep such transactions "in secret." Further, it was believed that "such societies are based on false and selfish principles, and are most dangerous in their tendencies." Consequently the Synod declared its "entire disapprobation of all such associations" and it "warned the members" of Synod and the "members of the churches not to stand connected with them."⁹⁷

The Ministerium had a similar problem in the late 1850's, which for a while provoked considerable discussion. It had to do apparently only with the German secret societies, which were "antagonistic to the Christian Church and tending to infidelity." When the question was first raised "respecting the connection of members of the Ministerium" to the societies, it was tabled. But then the Third Conference District (Albany to Buffalo) reported to the Ministerium that it had recommended "to all the members of the churches" in the conference district "to avoid holding any connection" with the societies. Thereupon a special committee was appointed by the Ministerium to study "the proper position our ministers ought to assume towards secret associations." But the committee did nothing and the agitation in the Ministerium apparently died down,

⁹⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1858, 14.

⁹⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1860, 19; 1862, 35.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1846, 26.

for in 1858 the committee was discharged without having made a report.⁹⁸

Other Reforms

Little was said in any of the synods about other topics of moral reform. The Ministerium, in fact, was silent on all of them. On the subject of Sabbath observance, the Franckean Synod in 1851 repeated the long list of acts considered sinful on Sunday, a list which previously had been condemned.⁹⁹ In the Hartwick Synod President Martin Stover presented a curious idea concerning a penalty for Sabbath breaking:

It is a significant fact that during the past season the greatest number of deaths reported of cholera have been on Mondays—the fruit of intemperance no doubt, and sinful indulgence on the Sabbath.¹⁰⁰

On the subject of war and peace, the Hartwick Synod was as silent as the Ministerium. The Franckean Synod spoke out only once, in 1858, and its resolution sounded as though the coming civil war were anticipated. Its action in 1845 had been against “giving countenance to or engaging in war,” which sounded like pacifism. But the 1858 resolution made clear that only participation in “offensive war” was “opposed to the spirit and design of the Gospel.”¹⁰¹

The Franckeans had to contend also with a resolution on the abolition of capital punishment. The resolution was introduced with the permission of the Synod by a young theological student who was not yet licensed and who had more brashness than discretion. “The practice of hanging men” for crime accomplishes nothing, his resolution read in great detail, except that “the body, perhaps the soul, is lost, and a man who is not fit to live is not fit to die.” Therefore the Synod should declare that “this in human practice is unnecessary, unchristian, and not partaking the spirit of the nineteenth century.” But the Franckeans wanted no part of it, so they neatly put it to rest by “laying it on the table for further discussion.” Several years later the matter was permanently disposed of by having it “indefinitely laid on the table.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 20, 29, 33; 1857, 21; 1858, 19-20.

⁹⁹ Above, p. 120.

¹⁰⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1849, 25.

¹⁰¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1845, 17; 1858, 19-20.

¹⁰² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1845, 23; 1847, 13-14.

Chapter 8

Missions

GERMAN HOME MISSIONS IN THE MINISTERIUM

The period from 1830 was one of rapid growth, particularly for the Ministerium. The growth was greatly enhanced by the increasing number of German immigrants, who settled all over the state of New York, chiefly in the larger cities and all the way from New York City to Buffalo.

*Rising Tide of German Immigration*¹

The period of extensive German immigration to the United States had begun about 1820. In that decade the number fluctuated between 200 and 2,000 a year, for a total of 6,700. Then the number rapidly increased, as may be seen in the following table:

1821-1830	6,700
1831-1840	152,000
1841-1850	434,000
1851-1860	951,000

The Germans left their homeland in large numbers because of bad economic conditions combined with political discontent, which reached its peak in the suppression of liberties following the revolution in Germany in 1848. The desire to emigrate to America spread like a fever. Sometimes whole villages sold out and with their pastor or physician at their head the people came to America.

¹Unless other citations are given, this section is based on (1) Samuel P. Orth, *Our Foreigners*, vol. 35 in *The Chronicles of America Series* (New Haven, 1921), chap. VI, "The Teutonic Tide"; (2) Albert P. Faust, "German Americans," in Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek, *One America* (rev. ed., N. Y., 1945), 104-108; and (3) by the same author, *The German Element in the United States* (N. Y., 1927), vol. 1.

These people were helped in their decision to leave by the glowing prospects of America. Tons of literature, much of it mixing fiction with fact, flooded Europe and was eagerly consumed. On this side of the Atlantic the gates were wide open to receive them all, for businessmen everywhere saw the economic gain to be derived from a wholesale immigration.

A large number of the immigrants came from the Lutheran states of Germany and many settled in the state of New York. The Ministerium received most of them because it alone of the Lutheran synods was in New York City, the port of entry, and it also occupied the Hudson Valley. Even when the immigrants went westward from Albany, especially into the larger cities, it was the Ministerium that got them German pastors. By the same token, German pastors coming here found greater fellowship among the growing number of pastors of their own language already in the Ministerium.

The Ministerium expanded rapidly in extent of territory. Already in 1833 a pastor was serving a congregation in Buffalo, "composed chiefly of German immigrants," while Rochester and Rush, about ten miles apart, were calling for a pastor. It was evident that already there were enough Germans "in the western counties alone" to justify sending in four or five pastors.²

At the same time, pastors and lay delegates of the Ministerium were called upon to collect "devotional books in the German language" to distribute to the newly formed German congregations. Every pastor was also requested to preach on the subject to his congregation and to take up a special offering for the new cause. Furthermore, the Ministerium's mission committee showed real vision when it reported that its members were "anxious to elicit the co-operation of our brethren of the Hartwick Synod," because "the field is vast and extensive."³

In the Ministerium the years 1834 and 1835 presaged what was to be a regular happening in the decades to come. In 1834 the congregations at Rochester and Rush were admitted into the Ministerium and a congregation was organized at Newark, New Jersey. The following year four congregations were admitted, one at Boston, Massachusetts, and three in Erie County: Eden, North Boston, and Hamburg. The congregation at Buffalo was getting funds to erect "a large church."

² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1833, 6, 24.

³ *Ibid.*, 1833, 15, 26.

Prospective fields were noted at Geneseo, Rome, Lyons and Cazenovia, in New York, and at Elizabethtown and Rahway, in New Jersey.⁴

Needed was a traveling missionary, and badly. But that required funds, and the funds which the mission committee could count on were exceedingly limited. What little it had, it had divided among four pastors, and the total was only \$170.⁵

No time was wasted however in lamenting the lack of means. The members of the Ministerium, spurred on by its mission committee, resolved that "we mutually pledge ourselves to each other and to the Church and to use the most untiring exertions in this sacred cause." Then it invited "the members of our congregations to make contributions," and promptly Pastors Berger, Strobel and Pohlman "severally pledged themselves to raise \$25 each" to start the movement going.⁶

Far-reaching Home Mission Plan

The Ministerium's semi-centennial year, 1836, was a memorable one in that, among other things, it planned a program of home mission activity on a large scale. It established a Missionary and Education Board of which the president of the Ministerium was chairman ex-officio. The board was to "have the regulation of all the missionary and education concerns" of the Ministerium.

To the board the Ministerium elected twelve clergymen and eight laymen. In addition it would have representatives from the congregations. A congregation contributing \$25 a year would have one representative; if it contributed \$100 or more it would have two representatives. Every pastor who raised \$25 or more would also be a member of the board.

An executive committee of the board embracing four clergymen and three laymen would have the real power in "pointing out the fields for missionary labor, the appointing of missionaries, the aiding of destitute congregations and of [theological student] beneficiaries." Getting the funds was a matter of real concern in the board's plan. The endeavor of the previous year (1835) had resulted in a fund of \$426.⁷ But that

⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834, 7, 19; 1835, 5, 7, 13-14, 16-18, 20-23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1834, 29-31; 1835, 22-23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1835, 12-15.

⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 13-14, 9.

was nothing to boast about because in the same year the smaller Hartwick Synod had raised \$1,059.⁸

While others were thinking and talking about it, Professor George Miller of Hartwick Seminary in 1836 "gave a practical demonstration by pledging himself to pay within the year \$50, provided ten others would do the same." That was indeed a pledge that meant sacrifice, in the light of incomes of the time. There were present to face his challenge fifteen pastors and eleven lay delegates. They rose nobly to the occasion. Seven pastors joined Miller in pledging \$50 each. Five more, together with one layman, pledged \$25 each. It all came to a total of \$550.⁹

The mission board had a huge task cut out for itself, as detailed in its carefully formulated plan of 1836.¹⁰ One group of Lutherans to be looked after was the younger generation. Since the Ministerium's churches were "principally located in thickly settled parts of the state where land is very valuable," the younger generation in increasing numbers were moving "to those portions of the country where they can begin life on a smaller capital." It was believed that "the number who thus depart alone must be almost sufficient to make a new congregation annually."

But to this group had to be added the growing number of German immigrants. The immigrants were "to be met with in every city, town and village. In the city of New York alone there is estimated to be not less than 20,000, in the state at large they cannot fall far short of treble that number."

The Ministerium leaders approached the problem realistically. "Our attention must of course be directed to those stations which have already been established, [for] most of them will need our assistance." After caring for that large order the board declared that it would "endeavor to enlarge the field of operations." But it would be difficult to determine what new work to start on, for "the ground we are called upon to occupy is so extensive, the work so important and momentous."

A decision made in 1835 was highly commendable, in the light of the distressing foreign language problem which the Lutheran church in this country had to face, and which the New York Lutherans had already experienced in the Strebeck-Willeston episode in Kunze's time:¹¹

⁸ See below, p. 199.

⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 16.

¹⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 29-30.

¹¹ Above, pp. 32-37.

GERMAN HOME MISSIONS IN THE MINISTERIUM

We want clergymen, particularly native-born clergymen, who can preach German and English, and who can go forth possessing not only the spirit of the gospel, but also that of our American institutions, manners, etc.¹²

Becomes Increasingly German

Getting native-born men to preach in German as well as in English was well-nigh impossible. It was difficult enough to get sufficient men to preach in English alone. As it actually turned out, however, the Ministerium received many pastors and candidates direct from Germany. They helped materially, especially men like Carl F. E. Stohlmann of New York City, to take the Ministerium to its advanced confessional position.¹³ But they also made the Ministerium increasingly German.

The first of the pastors from Germany was Wilhelm Moellman, who came from Hannover with excellent testimonials. He was assigned in 1836 to minister to the Germans in Albany. Two years later Carl Stohlmann became pastor of old St. Matthew's Church in New York City.¹⁴

In anticipation of pastors coming from Europe, the Ministerium in 1837 changed its constitution so that "credentials of an applicant for membership from Europe" were to be held over for a year, to permit its president to secure "official information" from Europe "as to his moral character and standing." This was of course not to apply to young men "who may come from Europe at the request of" the Ministerium.¹⁵

Several excellent theological candidates came over, at the request of the Ministerium's mission board, from the Rhenish or "Barmen" Missionary Society, which had been organized at Barmen-Elberfeld in 1815. John Muhlhauser came in 1838, was assigned to Rochester and ordained by the Ministerium that year. President Wackerhagen was impressed with his "theological and biblical knowledge, so firmly grounded in gospel faith, and animated by such a Christian zeal, not to mention his mature age and experience."¹⁶ George J. Kempe came the following year, was assigned to the Germans at Syracuse and ordained two years later.¹⁷

¹² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1835, 22.

¹³ Above, p. 124.

¹⁴ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1836, 26-27; 1839, 14. On Stohlmann, see also above, p. 145.

¹⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1837, 11-12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1838, 13-16, 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1839, 14; 1841, 14.

A stream of German theological students came to the Ministerium in the 1840's and 1850's. They came from many places and schools, including Halle, Prussia, Rentz, Bremen, Dresden, Saxe Meiningen, Basle, and Berlin;¹⁸ also from Denmark, and two from Holstein.¹⁹ Others had merely "Germany" as the place of their origin.

The German students were licensed or ordained upon their arrival, but apparently none of them did any further studying at Hartwick Seminary.²⁰ The Ministerium had forgotten the ideal held up by its mission leaders in 1835, doubtless because the need for German-speaking men was so urgent. It also went counter to the decision of the General Synod, which in 1845 directed its Committee on Foreign Correspondence, when seeking young men from missionary societies in Germany, to make sure that it was understood "that they spend at least one year in some one of the theological seminaries connected with the General Synod previous to their employment as pastors." The Ministerium had two members on that committee of the General Synod, namely, President Pohlman and Professor Henry I. Smith of Hartwick Seminary.²¹

Among the pastors who came in this period was Frederic W. T. Steimle. He arrived in 1851, having been ordained the year before in Lovrach, Baden. Fifteen years later he was to lead a group of the more conservative men out of the Ministerium to organize the "Steimle" Synod.²²

The growing German influence was evidenced by the consistent use of the word "German" in the titles of the new congregations admitted into the Ministerium, certainly in the 1850's. The earliest appears to be the "German Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Ghent" in 1853. The congregations received in the remaining years of that decade all had "German" in their titles: Syracuse, Rondout, Williamsburgh (Brooklyn), New York City (St. Mark's Church), Poughkeepsie, Staten Island,

¹⁸ In the order named: Christian Niemann, *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1842, 13; Frederick Poeschke, *Ibid.*, 1845, 27; Lewis Schwarz, *Ibid.*; Carl Siebke, *Ibid.*, 1846, 17, 19; Charles Pohle, *Ibid.*, 1851, 28-29; Gustavus Koch, *Ibid.*; Philip Krug, *Ibid.*; John Hennicke, *Ibid.*, 1856, 41.

¹⁹ In the order named: Augustus Held, *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1847, 17, 23-24; Gustavus Dirksen, *Ibid.*, 1848, 5; Frederick Clasen (Clausen), *Ibid.*, 1856, 41.

²⁰ None were listed on the student rosters in the annual catalogues of Hartwick Seminary, 1841-1860.

²¹ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1845, 35, 39-40, 84; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1845, 14. Smith later used the German form of his name, Schmidt, when he went to Columbia College as professor of German literature.

²² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1851, 27-29; *Protocol, Steimle Synod*, 1866, 1.

Oswego, Mt. Vernon, and Hoboken, New Jersey.²³ All the new churches in that decade were German except the "English Lutheran Church" in Brooklyn, which was organized in 1857.²⁴

In the same decade reports came in of Sunday schools using both German and English in the new congregations. In at least one of them, that at Utica, the German Sunday school was larger than the English. The German school had seventeen teachers and a hundred children, while the English school had fifteen teachers and ninety children.²⁵

There were other evidences of the growing German influence. From 1842 the minutes, or sometimes abstracts of them, were ordered printed in German in various German church papers and occasionally in bound form. Occasionally, as in 1858, the number of copies to be printed in German was equal to the number in English—500 copies each.²⁶

In the synodical meetings, certainly in the 1850's, there appeared to be as many services and sermons in German as in English. Sometimes the German overshadowed the English, as in the ordination service in 1853 when five candidates were addressed in German and only two in English, or in 1855, when the two candidates were both addressed in German.²⁷

The German trend may well be gauged by the way the Ministerium observed the Sunday of its convention of 1860 in Zion Church, Syracuse. In the morning the sermon was preached in German, followed by the communion. But President Pohlman was not present; he was preaching in English in the local Dutch Reformed Church. His synodical sermon in English was delivered at the evening service.²⁸

President Pohlman, native American, English speaking, Hartwick Seminary trained, appeared to take the Germanizing trend in his stride. He commented fulsomely on the topic in his president's report at that meeting in Syracuse in 1860. After praising in retrospect the union of the Ministerium with the General Synod, he dwelt on "another union which has exerted a still more powerful influence in establishing our

²³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1853, 8; 1855, 17; 1856, 7-8; 1858, 7-8. Verona and Utica were also listed as "German congregations" (*ibid.*, 1856, 7-8) but their official titles were omitted.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1858, 29; 1860, 28-30.

²⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1853, 11; 1856, 12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1842, 10; 1843, 13; 1845, 16; 1850, 22; 1857, 27.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1853, 33; 1855, 34.

²⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 5, 42.

Ministerium and increasing its usefulness. I refer to the happy union of the English and German element in our ecclesiastical councils."²⁹

ENGLISH HOME MISSIONS IN HARTWICK SYNOD

The Hartwick Synod was also greatly concerned about the German immigration. "There is a vast number of German immigrants scattered through the towns and villages within the bounds of this Synod," the mission committee reported in 1835. "These people, not understanding the English language, are like sheep scattered without a shepherd. It is important that the Synod endeavor to do something for their relief."³⁰

As early as 1833 the Hartwick Synod showed its readiness to minister to the Germans. That year, meeting at Dansville, President Lintner had a licentiate preach in German at the preparatory service. Then he himself the next day administered the communion "to the ministers, and also to a respectable number of communicants, in the German and English language, with the assistance of the brethren."³¹

At that meeting of the Synod, a home missionary and education committee was set up. The following year (1834) the committee was instructed "immediately to engage a [traveling] missionary for six months." But another year had to elapse before a man could be found; perhaps the "compensation" offered "for his services" was a deterrent, since it was to be a "sum not exceeding \$300," and there was no assurance that it would be paid.³²

Three Missionary Trips

For the summer of 1835, however, the Synod had two traveling missionaries. The first was John Selmser, pastor of the church at Richmondville, in Schoharie County. Leaving Richmondville, he traveled westward about 125 miles and made his first stop at Clay in Onondaga County, where he preached five times to a congregation for some time without a pastor. Thence he went northwestward about 25 miles to the town of Oswego, on Lake Ontario. He spent a week there and formed a small congregation just outside the town. He reported that there was "every prospect of establishing a church" there "if a minister can be secured."

²⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 46.

³⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1835, 23-24.

³¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1833, 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 1833, 13, 22; 1834, 22.

Thence he went westward through Wayne County, along the shore of Lake Ontario, to various settlements in "great need of missionary work" because the "country is overrun with all manner of heresies, and the moral state of the population is deplorable." He mentioned particularly stopping near Sodus Bay, where he found some Lutheran families.

Thence he continued westward into Monroe County, visiting the Ministerium congregations at Rochester and Rush. The Rochester congregation was formed exclusively of German immigrants. Selmser felt that the time was "very favorable for the establishment of an English Lutheran Church" there.

From Rush he went southward to Dansville and Sparta, in Livingston County, which were under the care of licentiate Martin Stover. He learned from Stover that there had been "some opposition from the Germans to English preaching," but the difficulty was about settled and the "prospect of uniting the congregation quite encouraging."

From Dansville he proceeded southeastward through what were considered "several important fields of labor" in Broome County on the border of Pennsylvania. In "most of the places he found the people lamentably deficient in the knowledge and service of God."

Thence he proceeded northeastward to his home town. The entire trip covered some 500 miles.³³

About the same time that Selmser was traveling in the western part of the state, Philip Wieting, pastor at Sharon, also in Schoharie County, was engaged on a similar mission "visiting our vacant congregations and destitute settlements to the north and in Canada."

From his home town he traveled north into Lewis and Jefferson Counties, where he "visited some of our destitute people." Thence he crossed over into Canada, where the "people evinced a great desire for religious instruction, following him from place to place and listening in crowds to the preached gospel." The congregations had been "imposed upon by unworthy ministers, but they were all still full of faith in God and of confidence in this Synod."³⁴ His trip covered some 400 miles.

Sometime also during the summer or early in the fall a third and briefer missionary trip was made by licentiate Martin Stover of Dansville. He traveled northward to Monroe and Orleans Counties near the shore of Lake Ontario, and visited the towns of Clarkson, Parma and

³³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1835, 21-23.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1835, 23.

Shelbyville. He found the "conditions of our people truly deplorable, without a church, without a minister, without any meetings of a religious kind."³⁵ His trip covered about 150 miles.

Enthusiastic Hopes

At the meeting of the Synod at which these missionary reports were made (1835) there was rejoicing because of the "very glorious missionary spirit that has been manifested in the congregations within the bounds of the Synod." This was evidenced by the contributions brought in that morning of \$276 for missions and education, and a special missionary fund of \$132, making a total of \$408. To this was added the offering of nearly \$50 received for missions at the Sunday morning service.³⁶

But the really dramatic hour of this rising missionary enthusiasm came on the day after the Synod adjourned, when the members of the Synod held a missionary meeting. George Lintner made a stirring address, which was followed by a brief but emotional account by Stover of his missionary trip to Monroe County. Then John Lawyer closed with an address that "held the attention of all present to some very important considerations, all of which had a direct bearing upon the subjoined resolution offered by the same Brother":

In view of the pressing wants of our church, and the great wants of a heathen world, we pledge ourselves that with the blessing of God, we will endeavor to raise during the ensuing year the sum of \$1,000 for missionary and education purposes.

It was a stirring resolution, stirringly made, and it was carried unanimously, "the congregation rising up in its favor."³⁷ Also it was a tremendous sum of money.

The next year's session (1836) was an outstanding one in the Hartwick Synod. The mission committee, following upon the enthusiasm of the missionary meeting of the previous year, had called John Selmser as its missionary for a year. He began his work in May, 1836, and had as his assistant Reuben Dederick, student at Hartwick Seminary, to do the German preaching.

Selmser and Dederick made an extended trip for four months through six counties: Onondaga, Oswego, Wayne, Monroe, Orleans, and Niagara,

³⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1835, 36.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1835, 6, 10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1835, 36-37.

all on or near the southern border of Lake Ontario. Their itinerary covered all the places visited by Selmser on his previous trip, as well as those visited by Stover, together with the towns of Manlius Center in Onondaga County, Parishville in Oswego County, Lyons in Wayne County, and Lockport, Royalton, Cambria and Wheatfield, in Niagara County.

The reports were the same as on his previous trip: ministering in English and German to congregations destitute of a regular ministry; good prospects for permanent congregations; and prejudice against the English language, particularly in the towns in Niagara County.³⁸

To this excellent report was added the glad news that the congregations had raised and paid in to the Synod \$483 for the mission and education fund and another \$576 for the special mission fund, a total of \$1,059. The women must have had a conspicuous part in raising the money, for they were singled out in a resolution of "gratitude" for their "noble efforts."³⁹

Weak Home Mission Policy

But with all its good intentions and enthusiastic response, the Hartwick Synod never had results such as the Ministerium did. Western New York was really Hartwick Synod territory, for when it organized in 1830 the Ministerium had but one parish west of Albany.⁴⁰

But the Hartwick Synod apparently made little effort to do work in the important cities between Albany and Buffalo. It put its energies into trips like that of Selmser in 1835, visiting mostly the villages. The same course was repeated in 1839, when the mission committee appointed Martin Stover a field missionary for a term of about a year with instructions "to devote his whole attention to small congregations within the bounds of the Synod."⁴¹

According to the committee's policy, Stover spent most of his time in the two villages, Shelby and Royalton, in Orleans County, and on some grand revivals. "So deeply did they mourn over their backsliding," he reported of Royalton, "that they could not sleep." When he was through, he had "about 30 who came out on the Lord's side." Then he "explored

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1836, 24-29.

³⁹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 11, 32.

⁴⁰ President Pohlman's report, *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 46. The parish embraced the villages of Palatine and Stone Arabia, in Montgomery County. *Ibid.*, 1831, 4.

⁴¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 13; 1839, 12.

new fields of labor," by visiting Clarence in Erie County, Clarkson in Monroe County, and the Ministerium's congregation at Rush, where he found "great dissatisfaction."

When his term was over and he had resigned to take a settled parish, the committee repeated its old formula: "The interests of our church in the western part of this state demand that a missionary be constantly employed to travel from place to place."⁴² True, those humble folk needed the gospel ministry, but the little places appeared to be the only ones considered by the committee. The cities it completely ignored.

So the work limped along through the 1840's and 1850's, with scarcely enough funds to dole out more than trifling sums to needy ministerial students, with little or nothing left over for home mission work. In the years from 1840 to 1846, for example, the combined income for home missions and ministerial education totaled only \$384, an average of \$55 a year!⁴³

There appeared always to be a real desire to do something about the German work, yet there seemed to be no vision as to how to get it done. The need of German and English-speaking pastors was talked about and the General Synod had its Committee on Foreign Correspondence to seek candidates from Europe, but there is no record that the Hartwick Synod ever considered going after such candidates. The only action revealed by the minutes was a resolution adopted in 1846 that "it be recommended to the brethren of Synod to devote more time to the acquiring of the German language."⁴⁴

When one looks at the array of new Ministerium congregations in 1860 in practically all the growing cities from Albany to Buffalo, and then looks at the record of the Hartwick Synod, one may well wonder how a territory that had been its own to start with could be so completely overlooked. By 1860 the Hartwick Synod had only two good-sized (for the period) congregations in this territory, that at Lockport in Niagara County with a membership of 210, and the Fayette-Bearytown parish in Seneca County, with 180 members. Other new names on the parochial table include Canajoharie and little villages and spots such as "Frieden's and Block Church," Jacksonville, Union, West Amsterdam, Hornellsville. The largest membership in the group was only seventy-nine.⁴⁵

⁴² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1839, 12-14; 1840, 13.

⁴³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1840-1847, "Contributions."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1846, 21.

⁴⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1859, 20; 1860, 13.

Failure in Buffalo

The Hartwick Synod did make one attempt at city work, when it entered Buffalo in 1845 to establish an English-speaking congregation. But it promptly invited the Ministerium "to join in the establishment and support" of the new venture. It certainly could not do it alone, when it was raising for home missions at most \$200 a year and frequently far less than that. The Ministerium responded promptly with a generous offer of an appropriation up to \$250.⁴⁶

The work went well. But only a year later, without a plan as to how it could be financed, the Synod authorized the purchase of a building which was secured the following year for something over \$6,000, to which had to be added the cost of furnishings. The Hartwick Synod managed to raise a special fund of \$620 by a visitation of its congregations, and the Ministerium raised \$280. Buffalo alone raised \$889. From other sources came \$70 more.⁴⁷

The result was a crushing debt, with a staggering annual interest, to be paid by a mere forty members. Consequently, when a good offer was received in 1849, the building was sold and the equity of \$337 was to be divided between the two synods. Buffalo, which gave as much as the two synods together, got nothing except a disbanded congregation. It was a sad story covering the short period of four years. After it was all over Levi Sternberg, the missionary who had been in charge, naively reported that "the church having been sold, the missionary did not deem a further prosecution of the mission at the present time advisable," and went off to another place.⁴⁸

Two comments must be made in closing this section. If the Hartwick Synod was not farsighted and at times actually feeble in its home mission activity, it was nevertheless the most active of the three synods in foreign mission work. Secondly, it had at least one conspicuous example of genuine home mission work in that done by the congregation at Schoharie during George Lintner's ministry.

In 1845 Lintner reported to the Synod that his church in Schoharie had "organized a church and built a house of worship in the village of Central Bridge." But the unusual part of the report was that "this is

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1845, 12-13; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1846, 15.

⁴⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1846, 6, 17; 1847, 14-15.

⁴⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1848, 16; 1849, 14; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1849, 7, 14-15.

the third church which has been organized from the church at Schoharie within the last 25 years." The three churches, and they were all Lintner's work, were Middleburgh, established in 1824, Breakabeen in 1843, and Central Bridge in 1844.⁴⁹

WESTERN HOME MISSIONS IN FRANCKEAN SYNOD

The Franckean Synod was little influenced by the German immigration settling in New York. Of the congregations organized, only two are known definitely to have been German, one at Watson, in Lewis County, and the other at Archbald, in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.⁵⁰

But what the Synod lacked in New York it made up elsewhere, for the Franckeans followed the German and Scandinavian immigration to Illinois and Wisconsin and did a work there that was outstanding.

At its organization in 1837, the Franckean Synod started its home mission program on an ambitious scale. It set up a board of missions, whose purpose was to aid feeble churches and to organize new churches, and "to extend the influence of the gospel through our land and other countries." Then "the brethren present were invited to make contributions to the board," and an offering of \$206 "was immediately raised." That was a remarkable response, for there were present only four pastors and 27 laymen.⁵¹

This generosity for the mission cause continued for several years. In 1838 the total was \$612, and in 1839, \$474. With such a fund to start with, the Franckeans went to work enthusiastically. One of their pastors, William Ottman, was immediately appointed a traveling missionary for a year at a salary of \$400. Two other men were engaged for part-time work, for which each received \$54. The total expended for the year was \$537. The following year (1838) three men were engaged for some months, at a total expenditure of \$333.⁵²

Erratic Home Mission Policy

In the first few years of the Synod's existence the missionaries organized at least eight new congregations, all in little villages: Argusville, Sodus, Parishville, Brownville, Stone Mills, Groveland, St. Johnsville.

⁴⁹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1845, 9; see also above, p. 146.

⁵⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1846, 21; 1850, 8; 1852, 5.

⁵¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 14-17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1838, 14; 1839, 20-21.

Most of them were in the counties around the southern and eastern shores of Lake Ontario. Another was in Bath, Canada.⁵³

But such a pace could hardly be kept up and a slump soon set in. By 1842 the contributions had dropped to \$96, and for four more years they never reached the hundred-dollar mark.⁵⁴ The mission work obviously had to be sharply curtailed. In 1843 the only expenditure was fifty cents for postage. In 1844 \$32 was spent, of which \$25 went to one man for "missionary services." In 1845 the expenditure was \$57, paid to three missionaries.⁵⁵

What has been said of the weakness of the home mission policy of the Hartwick Synod was even more true of the Franckean Synod. The Franckeans stayed completely away from the cities in New York, and devoted all their energies to the little towns and villages. The latter, of course, needed the gospel ministration as much as did the cities, but the Synod could not carry the burden, for few new congregations in villages could support a pastor. Consequently, as the synod's leaders later admitted, the "ministers who were instrumental" in the organization of the new congregations, "having expended what little of earthly goods they possessed, have been compelled to seek other fields of labor, where they could receive a support in some measure adequate." As a result these "small infant churches were left to starve out and to die."⁵⁶

The board of missions made the same acknowledgment. "In fifteen years," chairman Nicholas Van Alstine reported in 1852, "more than thirty new societies (congregations) have been organized and twenty-three new meeting houses have been erected; these are all paid for with the exception of one or two." But "quite a number are vacant" because of the lack of pastors. It was more than that, however. "These churches, with few exceptions, are either so isolated or so feeble that they cannot be supplied, if we had the men, without material aid." His conclusion was the frank admission that "in this respect we think, as a Synod and a missionary board, we have greatly but not intentionally erred."

Van Alstine admitted also the erratic home mission policy that had "left too many of our societies (congregations)," after they had been established, "to wither and dwindle, when aid from the board would have

⁵³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1839, 7; 1840, 10.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Reports of the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, 1842-1846.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1843, 22; 1844, 14; 1845, 26.

⁵⁶ Report of President Sefferenas Ottman to the Synod. *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1852, 6.

brought them into a state of permanence and prosperity; but instead of this, the fostering care of the board has been withdrawn, and exercised over new fields of labor; consequently these feeble churches have despaired."⁵⁷

In that respect, Van Alstine went to the heart of the home mission problem in his synod. Enthusiastically the Franckians had spread themselves out without apparent plan or logic. That was true of their own state, but at the time Van Alstine spoke so eloquently for a better policy the Franckians were in the midst of their biggest home mission venture in Illinois and Wisconsin. They had by that time apparently forgotten all about New York.

To show the bounds of the Franckian Synod, one needs a map of far more than western New York. Its bounds spread northward into Canada, southward to New Jersey and Pennsylvania, eastward to Rensselaer County east of Albany, and westward to Illinois and Wisconsin. In 1846, for example, the three congregations admitted into the Synod were in such widely separated points as Watson, in Lewis County, near the Canadian border; German Valley, New Jersey; and Sharon, Wisconsin Territory.⁵⁸

Good Work in Wisconsin and Illinois

If it was not wisdom that always guided the Franckians, they were certainly not short on zeal. That is how they got into the home mission work in Wisconsin and Illinois.

There is no introduction to the story of that venture. The story opens abruptly in 1846 with the application of "the first Evangelic Lutheran Church, of Sharon, Wisconsin Territory," for admission into the Synod. Missionary David Ottman had gone there apparently the year before and in September of 1845 had organized the congregation with twenty members who adopted the Franckian Synod constitution.⁵⁹

The Sharon congregation was admitted into the Synod in June. By September a young graduate of Hartwick Seminary, Marcus W. Empie, appeared before the Central Conference of the Synod, was "rigidly exam-

⁵⁷ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1852, 16.

⁵⁸ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1846, 21-22. The Pennsylvania congregations, in Middletown, Dauphin County, and Archbald, Luzerne County, were mentioned for the first time in the same *Minutes*, 1841, 32, and 1849, 31.

⁵⁹ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1846, 22.

ined" and licensed, and he "immediately accepted an appointment from the missionary board to labor in Wisconsin Territory."⁶⁰

The work in New York then gave way to that in Wisconsin. "Our missionary has met with success in Wisconsin," President Benjamin Diefendorf told the Synod in 1847, "and the field is all white and ready to harvest. Brother Empie must be sustained and others should be sent forth from this body to carry to the destitute of Wisconsin the bread of life. Our Norwegian brethren in this territory also have claims upon us. We should be ready and willing to extend to them a helping hand, in this their time of need."⁶¹

One of Empie's first accomplishments was the finding of candidate Ole Andrewson, for whom he vouched to the Central Conference of the Franckean Synod which in turn licensed him in 1847. Empie himself returned to the Synod in 1848 to be ordained. At that meeting candidate Paul Anderson, a Norwegian from Chicago, presented himself and was licensed.⁶²

The Franckean in 1848 rejoiced not only in ordaining one and licensing another for the western field but also in the fact that four more congregations from the west were admitted into the Synod. All were Norwegian congregations. Three were some sixty to seventy miles west of Chicago, and had been organized by Ole Andrewson the previous year. Together they had 134 members, who, as President Lawyer reported, "have been gathered on the principles of the gospel, with evidence of a change of heart, who are the friends of temperance and anti-slavery, and embrace the high and holy principles of our [Franckean] Evangelic Association." The fourth congregation was in Chicago itself and had the interesting title of the "Scandinavian Evangelic Lutheran Church of Chicago, Illinois."⁶³

At one of the afternoon services of that 1848 meeting Paul Anderson "gave an interesting account of the conditions and wants of the Norwegians in Illinois and Wisconsin and the means to be employed for their regeneration and welfare." The Franckean were stirred and responded with a resolution that the "providential and earnest call of the Norwegian and German population of Illinois and Wisconsin be

⁶⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1846, 12.

⁶¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 7.

⁶² *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1848, 6, 10, 14, 16.

⁶³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1848, 6-7, 15.

responded to by us as worthy of the highest profession we have made." As a result of the enthusiasm a third pastor, Christian Zipp, was appointed to go to Racine, Wisconsin. Then the Synod set up the "Wisconsin Conference" for its three pastors and two licentiates serving in Wisconsin and Illinois.⁶⁴

These men were missionaries of the first order, for their salaries must have been woefully inadequate. All that the Synod appropriated was \$50 each to Zipp and the two licentiates. Empie had received \$80 for the previous year. It was not stated what appropriations were to be made to him and Ottman for the year to come.⁶⁵

It seems hardly necessary to add that nothing was reported concerning home mission work in New York, nor were any appropriations made for work in that state.

Congregations were being developed in the west as rapidly as in the Ministerium in New York. In 1849 two more Norwegian congregations were admitted into the Synod, one in Illinois about forty miles north of Chicago, the other near Racine, Wisconsin, about seventy miles north of Chicago. In 1850 a second German congregation was admitted, at Burlington, twenty-five miles west of Racine; also a Swedish congregation at Andover, about 150 miles southwest of Chicago.⁶⁶

Meanwhile a monthly missionary paper titled the *Gospel Herald* was published by the Synod in 1850. It contained news of the "labors and success of our missionaries in the west," and its readers were also "cheered by the accounts of revivals" during the year. The first issue of 800 copies were mailed to subscribers throughout the Synod. Then the Synod decided to issue the paper quarterly without charge to the reader, with the hope that it would be paid for by collections to be taken in the churches.⁶⁷ No further reference was made to the periodical.

In 1851 the Franckians could feel a deep satisfaction in the knowledge that their work among the Norwegians had been exceedingly worth while. That year the Norwegian congregations organized the Synod of Northern Illinois. The Franckians showed their interest in the new Synod by sending two of their members, Nicholas Van Alstine and Henry Dox, "to visit the brethren there," and to be present at the first session in

⁶⁴ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1848, 15-16, 21.

⁶⁵ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1848, 23, 26.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1849, 7-8; 1850, 4, 6.

⁶⁷ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1849, 20; 1850, 6, 19-20.

order to extend personally the greetings and good wishes of the "mother" synod.⁶⁸

Van Alstine and Dox were observing men and the lengthy report of their "observations" makes interesting reading. One observation is particularly noteworthy, which the whole Lutheran Church in America might well have kept clearly before itself for a working principle:

So far as relates to foreigners, we are abundantly satisfied that the most direct manner of Christianizing is to *Americanize* them. This remark is submitted with greater freedom from the fact that it contains the opinion of some of the most intelligent ministers who are laboring among them.⁶⁹

The Franckean Synod continued work in Wisconsin, though it added one more congregation from Illinois. Pastor John H. Hiester of the West Pennsylvania Synod had taken the congregation at Farm Ridge, in La Salle County, eighty miles west of Chicago. He and his congregation found themselves so much in harmony with the "principles" of the Franckean Synod that the congregation voted to unite with it. The Synod was much concerned over the request. It felt that a congregation should be connected with the synod on the territory. But since the request had come wholly unsolicited it felt compelled to comply, so the pastor and congregation were received.⁷⁰

A not-so-complimentary comment about the Germans in Wisconsin was made by President Philip Wieting, solid Franckean, in his report to the Synod in 1859. Commending the work of Pastor Christian Sans at Watertown for "preaching closely the doctrine of the necessity of a change of heart," Wieting added: "This perhaps is the more necessary, from the fact that our German friends are more prone to a head than a heart religion."⁷¹

Synod Meets in Wisconsin

The climax of the work in the west was the holding of a meeting of the Franckean Synod in Wisconsin.⁷²

The continuing affection for the Synod which did so much for these

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1851, 13-14, 22; 1852, 4, 7, 11; *Minutes of the First Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois* . . . Sept. 18-23, 1851 (Chicago, 1851, 16 pp.), p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1852, 12.

⁷⁰ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1855, 5, 12-13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1859, 6.

⁷² The story was published by the present author under the title, "New York Synod Convention in Wisconsin, 1860," in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, Oct., 1946, 408-411.

congregations in their infancy, inspired an invitation to the Franckean Synod to hold its meeting in 1860 at Sharon station, in the first church it had organized in Wisconsin. The congregation had a special reason for choosing 1860, for it was erecting a new church building and the members wanted it dedicated by the synod to which they belonged. It was an invitation that few could resist but the trip would be an expensive one. It had cost the two delegates \$90 to attend the opening convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois. The members decided nevertheless to accept the invitation.⁷³

So, on Thursday, June 7, 1860, the Franckean Synod convened as scheduled in the newly erected church at Sharon station, whose pastor was Rufus Smith, Jr. Just one-half, or eleven, of the Synod's pastors were present, together with seven lay delegates. All three officers were present: President Philip Wieting, Secretary Henry Dox and Treasurer Nicholas Van Alstine. The Synod had still three congregations in the west that year. Two were in Wisconsin: the church in Sharon, with 153 members, and the church in Watertown, with 445 members; the third was the little congregation at Farm Ridge, Illinois, with only nineteen members. The Watertown congregation, incidentally, was the largest in the entire synod.⁷⁴

The dedication of the new church building was a notable event. It was part of the opening service of the Synod. After President Wieting had concluded his sermon, he "solemnly set the house apart as a place of religious worship." The congregation itself was doubly happy, for the new building became free of debt that day. Appealed to for an offering to wipe out the bills of about \$600 still due on the building, the people "nobly responded in cash and pledges to the amount of \$717," a sum sufficient to purchase also a bell.⁷⁵

In contrast to this inspiring episode, the Synod immediately had to take up a distressing task. It concerned the large and prosperous German church at Watertown, Wisconsin, served by Pastor Christian Sans. The whole story was not published, but it was reported that the congregation had been considerably stirred up because of the pastor's "earnest efforts to bring up his members to such habits of life as become the sincere followers of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁷⁶

⁷³ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1852, 14; 1859, 29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1860, 3, 8, 28.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1860, 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1860, 6.

If in his zealousness the pastor had endeavored to enforce the Franckean Synod's rigorous discipline of a Puritan Sabbath and total abstinence, it would not be difficult to understand that a German congregation would not like it. But the resentment went beyond the congregation, for there was so much "excitement stirred up against him among the German population" of the town that the pastor "was compelled to leave his field and flee for his life." The president of the Synod had taken prompt action by inviting the congregation to present formal charges at the meeting in Sharon, but none was forthcoming. The congregation appeared simply to ignore the Synod. Two years later its name no longer appeared on the synodical roll.

The general business of the Synod revolved around the customary standing committee reports upon the subjects of slavery, temperance, Christian union, and the state of the church.

The services on Sunday constituted another high light of the meeting. The Lutheran pastors were much in demand in the neighboring churches and altogether preached at twelve services throughout the day. In the Lutheran church the communion for the Synod was held at the Sunday morning service, as was the custom at the time, and the congregation united with the synod members in receiving the sacrament.

When at length the convention came to a close on Monday, June 11, the secretary recorded in the minutes some comments that may be readily appreciated:

The meeting in almost every respect had been one of more than ordinary interest. The attendance upon the means of grace during the entire session had been unparalleled, and the religious interest at times overwhelming. It was a moment worth a journey to the west to witness and experience, and a moment which in the memories of all present, will be recalled with satisfaction while life shall last.⁷⁷

Territory of the Three Synods

The story of the home mission work in this period makes quite evident the general conclusion that the Ministerium occupied all the cities but one; the Hartwick Synod the towns, with but a single city, and that not in New York; and the Franckean Synod only the villages. The tabulation following, for the typical year of 1856, shows this clearly:⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1860, 27.

⁷⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1856, 10-11, 46-47; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 9, 32, "List of Churches"; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1856, 8. Statistical tables were usually incomplete. The tables for 1856 seem to be the nearest to complete.

TABLE OF CONGREGATIONS IN THE THREE SYNODS, 1856

NEW YORK MINISTERIUM (70 Years Old)			HARTWICK SYNOD (26 Years Old)			FRANCISKEAN SYNOD (19 Years Old)		
<i>Congregations</i>	<i>Communicants</i>		<i>Congregations</i>	<i>Communicants</i>		<i>Congregations</i>	<i>Whole Number of Members</i>	
New York City			Boston, Mass.	200		W. Sandlake and E. Schodack		
St. Matthew's	1065		Bern and Gallupville (parish)	400		(parish)		228
St. James	125		Guilderland and Knox	350		Gardnersville		180
St. John's	794		Brunswick	250		Argusville		140
St. Luke's (Drees)	140		Livingston	190		Lawyersville		130
Swedish (Pehrson)	28		Middleburgh and Breakabeen	175		Fordsboro		129
St. Mark's (Conf. 179)	—		Schaghticoke	165		Summit		120
	—2152		Athens	165		Black Lake		100
Poughkeepsie	61		Cobleskill and Richmondville	165		Richmondville		100
Rhinebeck, St. Peter's and Red			Schoharie and Central Bridge	140		Orleans Four Corners		82
Hook, Zion's (parish)	235		Dansville and Sparta	137		Fort Plain		80
Rhinebeck, Third	88		West Sandlake	134		Center Valley		75
Albany			West Camp	130		Raymertown		70
Ebenezer	148		Johnstown	120		Poestenkill		65
German	183		Sharon	118		Freysbush		56
Pastor Wossidlo	552		Stone Arabia and Palatine	100		Starkville		51
	—		Canajoharie	40		Carlisle		51
Utica	883		Woodstock (no report)			Clay		50
Rome	588		Watertown and Bearytown (no report)			Leesville		47
Syracuse	196		Lockport (no report)			Newville		40
Rochester	292		West Amsterdam (no report)			Bryan's Corners		38
Buffalo, St. John's	483		New Rhinebeck (no report)			Lassellville		30
Brooklyn	827		Canajoharie (German) (no report)			Stone Mills		30
Pastor F. W. T. Steimle	45		Perkinsville (German) (no report)			Perch River		30
Pastor Garlachs (no report)			Dansville (German) (no report)			South Worcester		30
Pastor Winkelman (no report)								

Chaplain Carter 50

Williamsburgh

St. Paul's (no report) 85
 Pastor Weisel (no report) 420
 Rondout 390
 Lancaster 346
 Lafargeville 300
 Churchtown 295
 Waddington, St. Lawrence Co. 181
 New London, Oneida Co. 173
 German Valley, N. J. 140
 Saddle River, N. J. 115
 Spruce Run, N. J. 115
 New Germantown, N. J. 100
 Clermont 90
 Ghent, Christ 80
 Württemberg, St. Paul's 68
 Ancram 40
 Lyons
 Hartwick Seminary (no report)
 Valatie (no report)
 Liverpool (no report)
 Canada

Phillipsburg 236
 Montreal 172
 Philadelphia, St. John's 285

Total Congregations 46
 Total Communicants9486

Manheim (no report)
 Rush (no report)

27 Congregations1952

Also in the Synod:

Wisconsin
 7 congregations 497
 Illinois
 1 congregation 10
 8 congregations 507

Total Congregations 34
 Total "Whole Number of
 Members"1952

Total Congregations 33
 Total Communicants2979

THE MINISTRY FOR THE EXPANDING WORK

Dearth of Men for the Ministry

Getting enough men for the ministry to care for the existing congregations in the synods was a serious problem. But getting them for the expanding work seemed well-nigh impossible.

The dearth of ministerial candidates was a continuing lament. "It is a deplorable fact that we are very deficient in the number of our ministers," bewailed the committee of the Ministerium in 1833. "Old congregations can scarcely be supplied when they become vacant; many are thereby lost to us. And we have none to send to those settlements which are constantly forming."⁷⁹

A decade later the lament had an additional twist. "As soon as young men leave our theological schools they are invited to occupy the pulpits of congregations already organized," so the home mission field went begging.⁸⁰

Strangely enough, the lack was in English-speaking pastors. There came with the Germans enough pastors and theological candidates to care rather well for their congregations. But "had we one or more efficient young men who could preach in the English language," stated President Strobel in 1851 to the Ministerium, "we could do much."⁸¹

Hartwick Seminary was the chief source of supply of the English-speaking pastors, but when one looks over its enrollment the shortage in the three synods is readily understood. In the 1830's it appears that there were not more than eight theological students in all classes in any one year, and some of these were pre-seminary students. That meant at most only a few graduates each year. In the 1840's it was even worse. In the year 1842 there were no theological students at all, and in 1844 only two. There were two also in 1848, but by that time there were added six pre-seminarians.⁸²

Only in the 1850's did the situation change for the better, but even then there were only five theological students in all classes in each year up to 1858, when it went to seven, and in 1859 to ten. The number of pre-seminarians increased also and in 1859 there were eleven.⁸³

⁷⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1833, 21.

⁸⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1843, 23.

⁸¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1851, 31.

⁸² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1832, 10; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1842, 15; 1844, 16-17; 1848, 18.

⁸³ *Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hartwick Theological and Classical Seminary*, published in Albany for each year.

Gettysburg Seminary, with more theological students, was of some help, though it was too far away to supply many pastors. The first of its theological students to come to New York was the Negro Daniel Payne, licensed by the Hartwick Synod in 1837. In the 1840's only seven graduates came, and in the 1850's only three. In addition there were four who served outside New York for a year or two, then came to New York; three came in the 1830's and one in 1856. That made a whole total of only fifteen for the three synods in thirty years.⁸⁴

With the continuous shortage it was creditable that the synods did not lower their standards. "The urgent demand for ministers is no just ground for abridging the preparatory course of study," was the Ministerium's attitude. The Hartwick Synod's was the same: "The great destitution of the ministry in our churches requires of us vigorous efforts to meet the demand for an educated and well-qualified ministry."⁸⁵

The Franckean Synod also did not lower its standard for the ordained ministry, though they made no specific statements about it in the 1840's and 1850's.

Plans to Supply the Need

The synods tried every conceivable way to get capable men into the ministry. There were urgent entreaties to the pastors themselves. "The time has come when every minister among us ought to make an extraordinary exertion for the enlargement of the ministerial ranks," was the call in the Ministerium. "Young men of piety and talent should be sought and encouraged to enter upon a course of preparation for the sacred office," urged the Hartwick Synod. "That we search out and encourage pious men to qualify themselves for the ministry of Christ, in order that the waste places of Zion may be revived," entreated the Franckean Synod. The Franckean Synod even had one of its men engaged in corresponding with "pious young men" in order "to encourage them to prepare for the ministry."⁸⁶

Doubtless the most interesting method was that offered by a member of the Hartwick Synod, that when vacant congregations can get no pastor they should go "to the president of Synod, and that he be requested

⁸⁴ Abdel R. Wentz, *History of Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, "The Alumni Record," 363-421.

⁸⁵ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1846, 20; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1849, 24.

⁸⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834, 33; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1852, 20; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1850, 16; 1856, 25.

to announce their conditions through the church papers, with a view to solicit a correspondence with ministers of other sister synods in relation to them."⁸⁷

Each of the synods had a committee or board of education. These were to get more men for the ministry, but because they also had to provide for student aid, they had all they could do to get enough money to help students already in the seminary.

The Hartwick Synod seemed to have the most trouble. One year, for example, and that was not an isolated instance, it voted a student \$50 aid for the coming year "out of notes due by former beneficiaries, whenever collected." Which was certainly a great assurance to the student, especially when he later learned, as in this case, that there were no funds available. Ironically, the committee that year again "lamented that there were so few young men within the bounds of Synod preparing for the gospel ministry!"⁸⁸

Beneficiary Student Aid

The Ministerium's education committee was set up in 1832. It formulated a long series of rules and regulations for the students receiving "beneficiary" aid. They "must first have become communicant members of the Lutheran Church." They must make a pledge to work for the Ministerium for a year after licensure if needed. Aid was to be given for not more than three years. They must study at Hartwick Seminary "when required." "And when practicable, they shall become acquainted with the German language." Applicants must be examined by the committee on "their literary and religious standing."⁸⁹

The Hartwick Synod combined its ministerial education with home missions under a missionary and education committee in 1833. The committee was "authorized to employ missionaries and engage students of theology" and provide for their support. It was further to "prescribe the field of labor for the missionaries, and have the theological students whom they support" under its direction.⁹⁰

The Franckean Synod got its board of education under way in its first year, 1837. It had no long series of rules and regulations, but went right

⁸⁷ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1856, 16-17.*

⁸⁸ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1847, 13.*

⁸⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium, 1832, 10.*

⁹⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod, 1833, 13-14.*

to work "to educate indigent young men of piety, talents and gifts for the gospel ministry."⁹¹

But having great plans and getting the money to carry them out are two quite different things. All the synods started off with good offerings for their ministerial education funds, but the annual amount of the offerings was erratic. The Ministerium for example started with \$122 in 1833, then dropped all the way down to \$14 by 1837. In 1839 it jumped again to \$113, but the next two years dropped to \$9 and \$5 respectively. The same was true of the 1850's in which the highest amount in any one year was only \$116.⁹²

In the Hartwick Synod it was much the same. It started in 1835 with \$276 for both ministerial education and home missions, and for several years raised more than \$400 a year. But in the 1840's it never went above a hundred dollars except once, and in one year actually dropped to \$15. In the 1850's the receipts were more stable, though one year they hit a low of \$24 for education and \$34 for home missions.⁹³

The story was different in the Franckean Synod. In its first decade it went from \$133 down to \$19. But from 1847, when it combined ministerial education with home missions, its annual offerings were quite steady, averaging \$337 a year. Its banner year was 1859 when it received \$751 and expended \$505 in supporting seven beneficiary students.⁹⁴

Getting the contributions was usually a hit and miss affair. The usual method was to take a "collection at least once during each year, in all our churches."⁹⁵ But that was hardly a method to be relied upon to bring in a steady income.

The Ministerium in the 1830's set \$75 as the maximum annual amount for a student. Generally the students received according to their need, from \$40 to \$75 a year. The Hartwick Synod apparently had the same maximum, and payments ranged anywhere from \$20 to \$75. The Franckean Synod had a maximum of \$75, with payments similar to those in the other synods.⁹⁶

The Hartwick Synod had also an active "Female Association" which

⁹¹ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, Oct., 1837, 19.

⁹² *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1830-1860, "Contributions."

⁹³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1830-1860, "Contributions."

⁹⁴ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1830-1860, Treasurer's Reports.

⁹⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1851, 16.

⁹⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1832, 10; 1833-1860, Reports of Education Committee, later Missionary and Education Committee; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1833-1860, Reports of Missionary and Education Committee; *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1838-1860, Reports of the Board of Education.

assumed the entire support of the education of Walter Gunn, first foreign missionary from the Synod.⁹⁷

In the Ministerium and the Hartwick Synod a bond or note was required of every beneficiary student. In the Ministerium the bond was returned when the student had "complied with the requisitions of his pledge," which apparently meant completing his studies and being ordained. In the Hartwick Synod the notes were to be cancelled at his ordination.⁹⁸

Despite the small grants given to beneficiary students their needs were not great at Hartwick Seminary. There was no tuition fee for theological students. A room in the academy cost \$1 a term. "Good board" could be gotten "in respectable families in the neighborhood" for \$1.25 to \$1.50 a week. The "incidental expenses" including laundry would be "trifling," so that a student could get through the whole year for about \$90.⁹⁹

Hartwick Seminary

The first three years of the Hartwick Seminary curriculum made up its classical department, comparable to a junior college. The theological department followed, also with a course of three years.

That the student got a solid course in the theological department may be gauged from the curriculum in use in this period before the Civil War:

In the first year or Junior Class: church history, Hebrew, Greek Testament, Gospels, logic, oratory, composition of essays, Jahn's Archaeology, Abercrombie on the intellectual and moral powers.

In the second year or Senior Class: Horne's Introduction, church history, exegesis of Gospels and Epistles of John, Griesbach's Synopsis, systematic theology by Storrs and Platt, Hebrew, Greek Testament, composition and delivery of sermons.

In the third year or licentiates: exegesis of most of Paul's letters, moral theology, symbolical books, Septuagint, history of dogmas, pastoral theology and church government, church fathers, sermons and skeletons.¹⁰⁰

While the number of theological and pre-seminary students remained

⁹⁷ See below, p. 219.

⁹⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1832, 11; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1855, 26.

⁹⁹ *Annual Catalogues of Hartwick Seminary*, 1849-1859.

¹⁰⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1834, 40; *Annual Catalogues of Hartwick Seminary*, 1851-1859.

small, the number of general students had increased sufficiently by the early 1830's that a third professor was constantly talked about. But the Seminary was in continuous financial straits and the Ministerium and Hartwick Synod could not help. Some improvement at least was made in enlarging the building in 1841 to provide thirty-two rooms "for the accommodation of students."¹⁰¹

Meanwhile talk of the removal of the Seminary went on. Proposals were made by the people of Cooperstown to have it there and the Hartwick Synod unanimously backed this up "as highly beneficial to the institution." The Ministerium also agreed "heartily."¹⁰² But nothing came of it.

Then in the 1850's there was talk about removing only the theological department to "a more favorable locality in the midst of a denser Lutheran population, where it might be better sustained," and a "joint convention" of the Hartwick Synod and the Ministerium was to be called in 1852 about it.¹⁰³ The Franckean Synod as usual was left out. But again, as usual, nothing came of all the agitation, nor did the joint convention materialize.

If one believed in catalogues he would certainly discourage any attempt to remove the Seminary, whose location was enticingly described as being "in a remarkably healthy section of the country, and the surrounding community is distinguished for morality and intelligence." Students, of course, might wonder at the kind of paradise they were entering when they read in the catalogue that "there is absolutely nothing in the place calculated to divert the attention of students from their studies, or to tempt them from the path of rectitude."¹⁰⁴

The Franckeans apparently did not join in the agitation for removal, but they did agitate in another direction and succeeded. That was for a "female department" to be connected with the Seminary. They started the agitation in 1847, but a majority of the trustees "thought the measure unfeasible." The Franckeans persevered, however, and in 1851 the new department with twenty-seven "females" became a part of the institution.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1834, 19; 1835, 11; 1836, 10-11; 1841, 23-24.

¹⁰² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1833, 11; *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1838, 14.

¹⁰³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1852, 11, 24, 29.

¹⁰⁴ *Annual Catalogues of Hartwick Seminary*, 1851-1859.

¹⁰⁵ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, 1847, 14; 1848, 19; 1852, 13; *Annual Catalogue of Hartwick Seminary*, 1852.

The female department definitely put new life into the Seminary. Already the following year it was reported that the "prospects of the institution have materially brightened and they are now more encouraging than they have been for a number of years." Five years later the report was even more glowing. "This institution continues in a flourishing condition. There has been an unusually large number of young men preparing for the ministry." The latter statement was certainly true. There were five theological students and thirteen pre-seminarians.¹⁰⁶

With the Seminary growing, particularly in its theological department, there came the time when a third professor just had to be added. The alumni this time took action by calling a meeting and proposing "to raise \$10,000 for the endowment of another professorship." The representatives present from the three synods were "requested to bring the matter before their respective synods."¹⁰⁷

The Ministerium promptly voted approval and asked the other two synods to go along. But the Hartwick Synod balked, stating that it was "not willing to take any measure to assist in raising the \$10,000 until such changes be made as will give us as a Synod a proper representation in the Board of Trustees."¹⁰⁸ So once again there was no advance and before the problem was settled the country was engulfed in civil war.

FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE THREE SYNODS

*Beginnings Under General Synod*¹⁰⁹

Foreign missions had its beginnings in the synods in New York in the 1840's, when the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod sent to India as its first missionary Walter Gunn of the Hartwick Synod.

The Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod had been organized in 1837 and connected itself with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, an interdenominational agency. By 1841 it had decided upon India as its first field and called Carl F. Heyer,

¹⁰⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1852, 43; 1857, 23-24; Annual Catalogue of Hartwick Seminary, 1857.

¹⁰⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 23.

¹⁰⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1860, 24; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1860, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Unless other citations are given, this section is based upon the minutes of the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod, appendices to the *Minutes, General Synod*, 1837-1862.

affectionately known as "Father" Heyer, as its first missionary. But Heyer declined because of the Society's tie-up with the American Board of Commissioners and went to India under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Ministerium.

Walter Gunn was called to be associated with Heyer in Guntur, India. He was to receive a salary of \$600 a year and his "outfit." After being commissioned in Philadelphia, he left America in November, 1843.

Gunn was a member of George Lintner's congregation in Schoharie. That this congregation should be so honored is no accident. At a time when in the whole Hartwick Synod there were only five missionary societies, three of them were in Lintner's parish. Two of them, interestingly enough, were *men's* missionary societies.¹¹⁰

Gunn studied theology at Gettysburg Seminary. According to a distinguished fellow student the "most striking feature of his character was his singleness of purpose," for the "work of missions was to him the object of life."¹¹¹ Upon his graduation at Gettysburg in 1842 he was licensed and the following year ordained by the Hartwick Synod.¹¹²

Gunn, however, did not long survive in the career so dear to his heart. He was found to have pulmonary tuberculosis, in July 1851 he died.

The year after Gunn's death, William E. Snyder, the second man from the Hartwick Synod, was appointed to go to India. He was a nephew of George Miller of Hartwick Seminary, and came from New Jersey. He was graduated at Hartwick Seminary in 1849 and stayed on at the seminary as a teacher until 1851.¹¹³ He was licensed in 1850 and after receiving his call from the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod was ordained at a special meeting of the pastors of the Hartwick Synod in July, 1851.¹¹⁴

Snyder sailed in August, 1851, with William J. Cutter, another graduate of Hartwick Seminary. The latter had been a Roman Catholic originally from Germany, but long a resident in the United States. He had been "converted at a synodical meeting" in 1840, and had united with the Lutheran Church at Jeffersonville, Kentucky. His association

¹¹⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1831, 6.

¹¹¹ Charles A. Hay, "Walter Gunn," in *Annals of the American Lutheran Pulpit* (N. Y., 1869), 216.

¹¹² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1842, 22; 1843, 25.

¹¹³ Annual Catalogues of Hartwick Seminary 1849-1851.

¹¹⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1850, 20-21, 30-31; 1851, 8, 22.

with New York came a decade later when he was at Hartwick Seminary for a year and was graduated in 1851.¹¹⁵

While in New York Cutter became associated in some way with the New York Ministerium, but the only reference in its minutes is vague: "Upon the recommendation of the examining committee," reported President Strobel in 1851, "I have extended the licenses of the following candidates": (then he mentions five names, the last of which was) "William J. Cutter, missionary to India, and since ordained by the Miami Synod."¹¹⁶

Both Snyder and Cutter served about five years, when they had to return to America because of ill health. Cutter then served several congregations in the Hartwick Synod. Snyder stayed home only a year or so, then returned to India. But not for long, for he died there in 1859.¹¹⁷

Activity in the Synods

In the Ministerium there appeared to be little concerted action in behalf of foreign missions until just before the Civil War. President Pohlman was a founder of the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod and his congregation at Albany was at the top of the list of contributing churches. Apparently only a few congregations contributed at first. In the 1850's interest grew and soon the Ministerium received offerings averaging about \$500 annually for foreign missions.¹¹⁸

In the 1840's the Ministerium began to hold missionary meetings on the Monday evenings of its annual meetings. The subject of foreign missions was taken up for the first time at the 1848 meeting. Thereafter foreign missions received an increasingly prominent place.¹¹⁹

In 1859 the missionary festival was heard of for the first time in the Ministerium. It was doubtless modeled after the *Kirchentag* of Germany and was held in a city or area for a group of congregations. It apparently started at Rochester, where George Kempe was pastor. His report of the first one is interesting:

On the 23rd day of June we enjoyed a privilege and blessing in keeping our first missionary festival. The brethren Volz, Knapp, Stahlschmidt and Weis-

¹¹⁵ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1853, 52; *Annual Catalogue of Hartwick Seminary*, 1851.

¹¹⁶ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1851, 31.

¹¹⁷ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1857, 48; 1859, 73; 1862, 76; *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 27-28; 1858, 10.

¹¹⁸ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1838-1860, "Contributions."

¹¹⁹ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1840-1860, the Monday evening meetings.

FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE THREE SYNODS

kotten assisted on this interesting occasion. Divine worship and religious services were continued throughout the day and the congregation manifested a deep interest, as was seen by the crowded audiences in each of the services. Special hymns were published for the occasion, and the Christian harmony and feeling that pervaded the assembly indicated the presence of the Lord, and made each one feel "it was good to be there."¹²⁰

In the Hartwick Synod foreign missions was one of the high points in its synodical life right from the time the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod was organized in 1837. That was due in large measure doubtless to President George Lintner, who was an organizer and vice-president of the Society.

In 1838 it became known that student Walter Gunn of Lintner's congregation had "dedicated himself to the work of foreign missions." Consequently, when the missionary meeting was held on one of the evenings of the Synod that year, it turned out to be a "very spirited" meeting. It was resolved that "an immediate effort be made" in the churches "to raise funds sufficient to enable" the General Synod's Society "to send out and maintain a missionary in India." Sixty dollars was pledged by the people present.¹²¹

The following year Lintner got the Synod to make an appeal for the unusually large sum of \$1,000 for foreign missions, all of it to be turned over to the General Synod's Foreign Missionary Society. The appeal turned out a great success, resulting in cash receipts of \$738 in 1839 and \$184 in 1840, for a total of \$977.¹²² But, as mentioned in the discussion of the home mission work of the Synod, the receipts for home missions and ministerial education the same years took a plunge.

After doing so well with its foreign mission appeal, the Synod received quite a shock in 1841 when it learned that Heyer had refused to go as the General Synod's missionary to India. This however was soon turned into rejoicing when two years later its own Walter Gunn accepted the General Synod's call. At the Synod's missionary meeting before he left, Gunn delivered "a soul-stirring address," which was heard with "the deepest attention by the Synod, the ladies of the Female Association (which had supported him in his education), and the other people present." On the following morning he was ordained.¹²³

¹²⁰ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1859, 12.

¹²¹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1837, 13-16.

¹²² *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1839, 16; 1840, 11; 1841, 11.

¹²³ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1841, 13; 1843, 12, 17, 25, 29. His ordination is described above, p. 151.

A second ordination to occasion great rejoicing in the Hartwick Synod took place on July 30, 1851, when William Snyder received that rite prior to his departure for India. Since news traveled slowly at the time, the Synod did not know that Walter Gunn had died just a few weeks before.¹²⁴

One more meeting in the Synod must have been especially inspiring. That was the foreign missionary meeting in connection with the Synod session in 1856, at which both Snyder and his associate Cutter were present after having returned home from India.¹²⁵

The Franckians at first concentrated entirely upon home missions. At the beginning of their synodical life, it is true, they started out by calling upon the churches to "obey the loud calls of God" and to "engage with all their resources in the cause of missions." But when the first foreign mission field was opened they declared that "while they sympathized with foreign missions," the need of the Norwegians and Germans in the west called "loudly for speedy aid." Consequently, they put all their resources into that field. About that time they talked of sending their Negro pastor David Payne to the West Indies "whenever the sum of \$500 shall be raised." But nothing came of it.¹²⁶

When most of the work in the west had been transferred to the Synod of Northern Illinois, the Franckians turned seriously to foreign missions. An "effectual door" seemed "providentially" to open, President George Hemperley reported, for there was talk of the General Synod opening a mission in Africa which "strongly invites our attention and sympathy." But when they got to discussing what to do about it, there were certain convictions and memories of the past that considerably affected their decision.

They decided at the outset that "we cannot identify ourselves with any society which is trammled by or sustains a symbolical religion, or which endorses or gives countenance to American slavery." That left out the Foreign Missionary Society of the General Synod. But the American Missionary Society did qualify. It had recently been organized by persons of confirmed anti-slavery views who had separated themselves from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. So the Franckians "saw no reason" why they should not be associated with the

¹²⁴ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1851, 21-22; *Minutes, General Synod*, 1853, 52.

¹²⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1856, 6.

¹²⁶ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, Oct., 1837, 17-18; 1839, 22-23.

American Missionary Society, and "for the present" at least they would send the money "raised for foreign missions into the treasury" of that society.¹²⁷

The following year the Franckians learned from Morris Officer, who was to have charge of the African mission, that the new mission would not get under way for some years. So the Franckians changed their mind on two items. First, they decided not to hold up their contribution until the African mission would be started, but sent it off immediately "to be devoted to the work in India." Second, and this was quite a change of mind and heart, they sent it to the General Synod's Foreign Missionary Society. The contribution was \$300, a generous one.¹²⁸

Women's Missionary Society

The Hartwick Synod was the first to have a strong synodical women's missionary society, or, as it was known in those days, a "Female Association." Once again the Lintner name was in the forefront, this time Mary Eliza Lintner, wife of the synodical president.

The organization of the women's society came as the result of a quaint plea in 1836 from the Synod's education committee:

Your committee would also appeal to another class in the church: we mean to our Christian females. Many thousands of dollars are raised by pious females in these United States to aid both foreign and domestic missions. Sisters in Christ, you have as yet done but little—will you not engage with all your hearts in this cause *now*? Will you not begin, and in some of the wealthy churches contribute \$50, and \$80, and a \$100 and more, to sustain one, two or more missionaries? In this way, if not in any other, *it may be permitted for a woman to speak in the churches*.¹²⁹

At the meeting of the Synod the following year (1837) the pastors' wives organized the "Female Association of the Hartwick Synod" for the "purpose of educating a foreign missionary." Learning that Walter Gunn was willing to go to the foreign field, the Association devoted itself to supporting him during his course of studies. It raised and paid over to him \$387 in the six years he spent at Union College and Gettysburg

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1853, 16; Leonard W. Bacon, *A History of American Christianity* (N. Y., 1900), 255n, 314n.

¹²⁸ *Minutes, Franckian Synod*, 1853, 6; 1854, 9; 1855, 26; 1856, 21.

¹²⁹ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1836, 30. The italics are the committee's. The members of the committee that year were Lawyer, Wieting and Ottman, who with another pastor organized the Franckian Synod the following year. Above, Chapter 5.

Seminary.¹³⁰ After Gunn was ordained and left for India in 1843 the Association no longer reported to the Synod.

Shortly after the organization of the synodical Female Association, women's societies were formed in the congregations of the Hartwick Synod. The first to be reported were in the parish of Brunswick and Schaghticoke, north of Albany, whose Pastor Senderling was then president of the Synod. Within a year there were societies in twelve congregations of the Synod, and together they raised \$168 that year.¹³¹

Little was reported of the congregational societies in the Hartwick Synod after 1843. A few were listed among those contributing to the Synod for mission work. Conspicuous was the society of the Johnstown-West Amsterdam parish. In 1848 it contributed \$40, the largest contribution that year from any society or congregation in the Synod.¹³²

Missionary societies were heard of some years later in the Ministerium. One of the earliest was a "Little Girls' Missionary Society of Hartwick," which in 1848 contributed to the synodical treasury \$20 for missionary Gunn. By 1860 there were women's societies in at least half a dozen congregations of the Ministerium.¹³³

Monthly Concert of Prayer

One of the vital phases of the missionary movement was the "monthly concert of prayer" adopted by the General Synod in 1835, two years before its Foreign Missionary Society came into being. The "monthly concert," as it was regularly called, gave every congregation an opportunity to be an active partner in the church's missionary work:

On the first Monday in every month in the evening at early candlelight, we set apart an hour for concert prayer in all our congregations, to petition the Lord for an outpouring of his Holy Spirit on our churches, and in particular on those destitute of the gospel—that he would call more laborers into the harvest, and revive a missionary spirit in us and our congregations, and make us all willing to do more for his church and kingdom.¹³⁴

When this resolution of the General Synod came to the Hartwick Synod several months later it was "warmly advocated and unanimously adopted." It was put into practice, too, for the next year the missionary

¹³⁰ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 12-14; Reports of the Female Association in *ibid.*, 1839-1843, especially 1843, p. 15.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1838, 18; 1839, 10.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1848, 10, 12-13.

¹³³ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1846, 10; 1860, 12-13, 16-17.

¹³⁴ *Minutes, General Synod*, 1835, 22.

committee reported that to the best of its knowledge the "monthly concert" was held in most of the churches of the Synod.¹³⁵

The Franckean Synod advocated it just as warmly. At its first meeting it "most affectionately" asked its congregations to "attend punctually on the monthly concert of prayer," and with "energy and zeal" to promote the interests of foreign and domestic missions."¹³⁶

In the Ministerium, congregations were observing the "monthly concert" long before any official action was taken. That did not come until 1844, when the Ministerium recommended "most earnestly to all the ministerial members of this body without delay to establish the concert of prayer for foreign missions and our church."¹³⁷

Just how far the "monthly concert" was observed over the years is difficult to ascertain. The Hartwick and Franckean Synods had "prayer meetings" in most of their congregations. The Ministerium had some also. In the Hartwick Synod these antedated the "monthly concert." Perhaps the "monthly concert" became part of the regular prayer meeting schedule.

The Franckean Synod had the largest number of prayer groups, numbering in the 1850's between forty and fifty in some thirty congregations. The Hartwick Synod in the same decade had between twenty-five and thirty-five similar groups in about thirty congregations. The Ministerium had no rubric for prayer groups in its parochial statistical tables, but marginal notes in the tables after 1855 indicate that at least nine of the fifty-five congregations had prayer groups.

An interesting report has been preserved of what may likely have been a typical prayer meeting, held in the 1830's in a congregation of the Hartwick Synod:

The meeting was largely attended. Without much delay the exercises were commenced. There was more than usual interest. No time was lost. Prayer succeeded prayer in unbroken succession, and each exceeded the preceding in faith and fervor. There was much freedom, much depth of devotion, much apparent humility, much earnestness. In a subdued manner, the groan of anxiety and the sigh of desire were occasionally heard, but there was nothing suggestive of disorder or confusion. There was some speaking. It consisted of brief statements relating to Christian experience, about which there were points of thrilling interest, but nothing which bordered upon extravagance.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *Minutes, Hartwick Synod*, 1838, 30.

¹³⁶ *Minutes, Franckean Synod*, May, 1837, 18-19.

¹³⁷ *Minutes, New York Ministerium*, 1844, 21.

¹³⁸ Henry L. Dox, *Memoir of Rev. Philip Wieting*, 138-139.

MISSIONS

THE FIRST SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

Summing up the first seventy-five years of New York synodical history, the two separating synods no less than the Ministerium were well established by the eve of the Civil War, most of the wounds engendered by the separations were healed, and each synod had a distinctive character of its own. But the peaceful situation was not to continue long. More distressing experiences were soon encountered, through new and painful separations that seemed inevitable.

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Congregations of the New York Ministerium, Hartwick Synod, and Franckean Synod in 1856

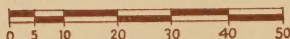
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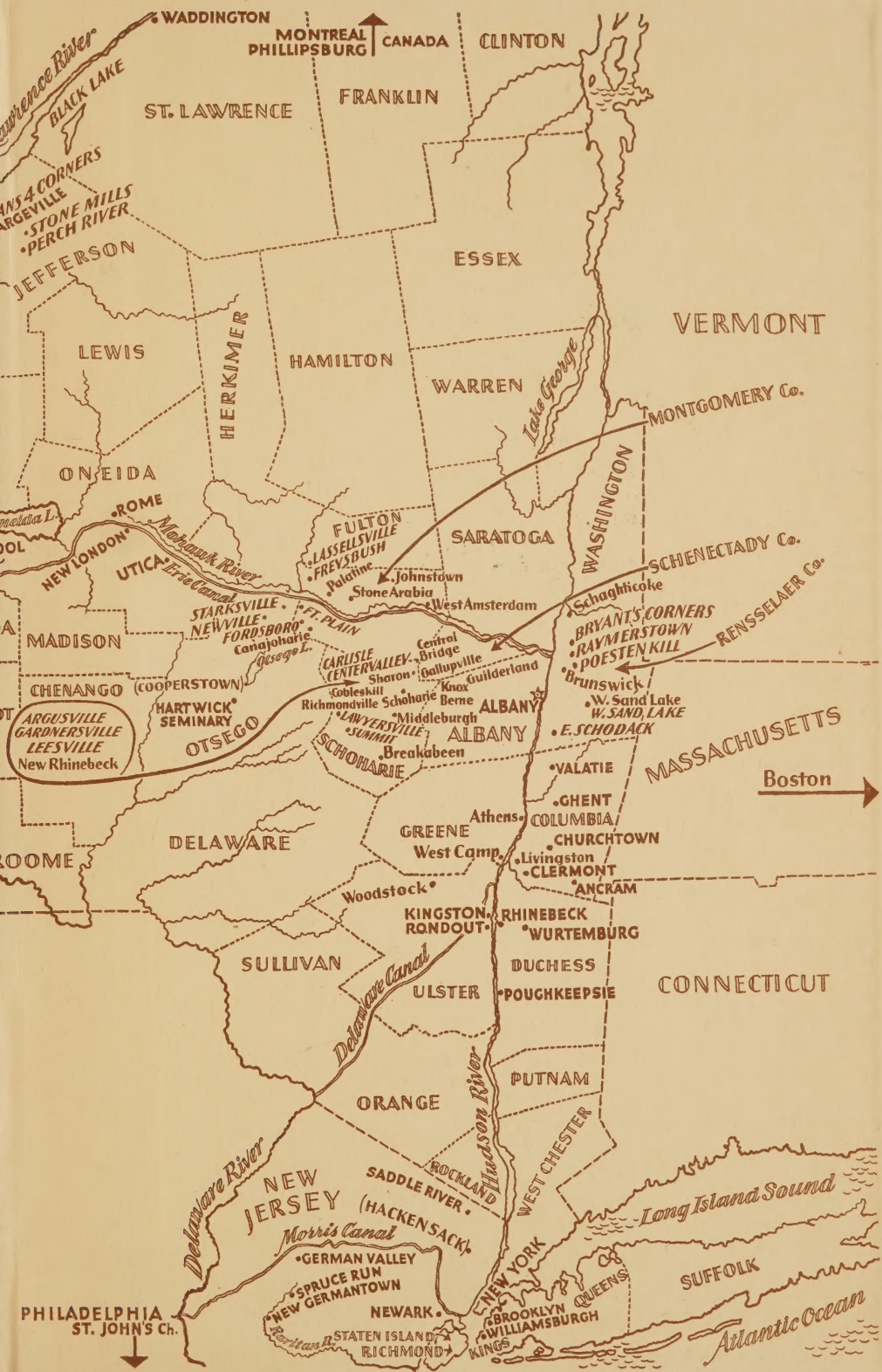
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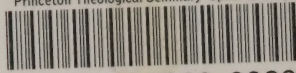


Legend

ALBANY. . . . Congregation in N. Y. Ministerium
SUMMIT. . . . " " Franckean Synod
Schoharie . . . " " Hartwick Synod
Lake Erie . . . Bodies of Water
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